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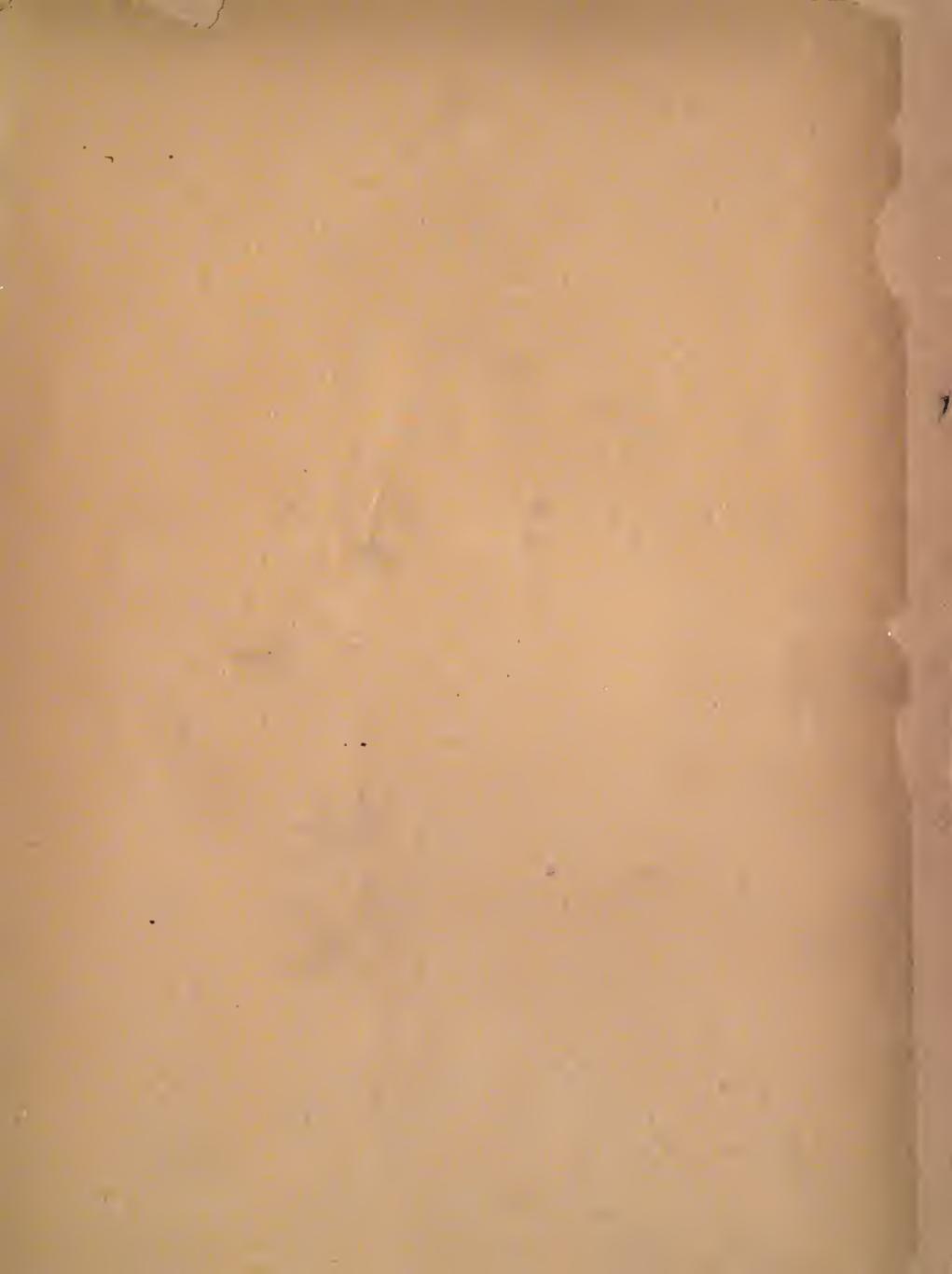
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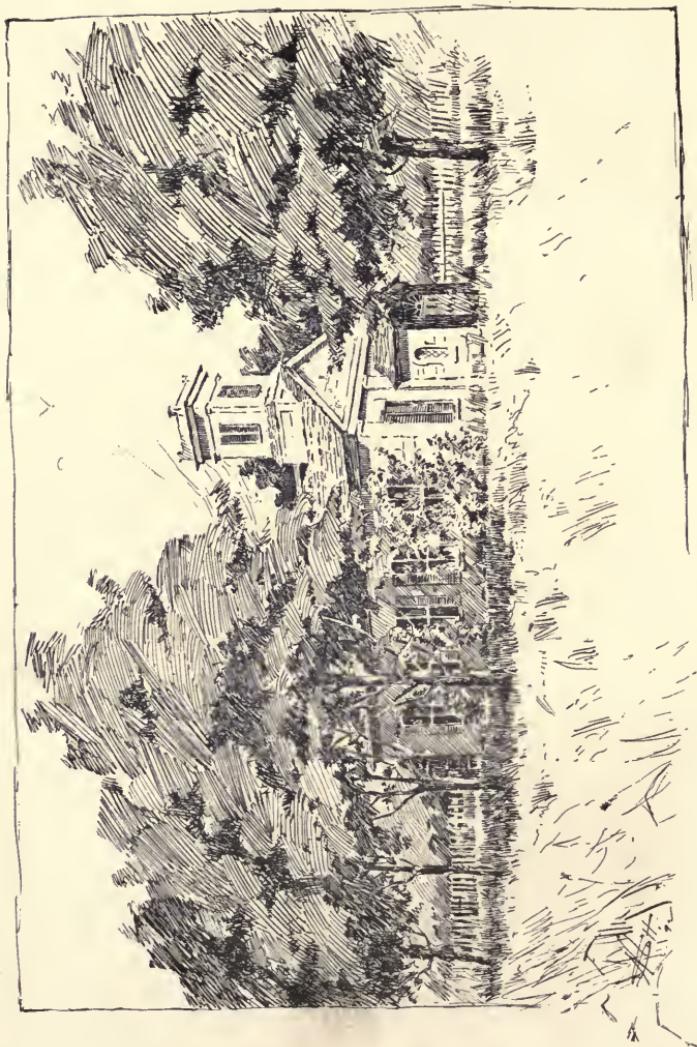






FIFTY YEARS OF UNITARIAN LIFE.

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Erected 1843.

Fifty Years of UNITARIAN LIFE.

BEING A RECORD
OF THE PROCEEDINGS ON THE
OCCASION OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE ORGANIZATION OF THE FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF
GENEVA, ILLINOIS, CELEBRATED JUNE TENTH,
ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH,
1892.

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EDITED BY
T. H. EDDOWES, FRANCES LE BARON,
GEORGE BRAYTON PENNEY.

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Mr. Hester's Survey

Editors' Preface.

THE celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of a Unitarian Society in the West is not an event of such common occurrence that it should receive only passing notice. The moral and spiritual significance of such an occasion comes with such stimulating force to all who are fighting the battle of freedom for mind and soul, that it has seemed to many who were present at the semi-centennial exercises of the Geneva Society that the spirit of the occasion should be perpetuated in some enduring form, and it was in response to the expressed wish of members and friends of the Society that the publication of this volume was undertaken.

The work has grown on our hands and instead of presenting a few pages of matter of purely local interest we feel that in this little volume we are making a unique contribution to the literature of the denomination, with a value far exceeding the limits of local association and personal reminiscence, for in these pages may be traced the evolution of a typical Liberal Church.

We have been greatly aided in a somewhat difficult

task by the friends who have kindly furnished and revised manuscripts, and especially are we indebted to Rev. W. W. Fenn of Chicago for the manuscript of his sermon on "Some Religious Changes in Fifty Years" which properly stands at the opening of the book and by its breadth and catholicity interprets the spirit of the anniversary occasion. For drawings of the church and parsonage we are indebted to Mr. S. Nelson Abbott and to Miss Grace D. Long, both of the Society and we would also acknowledge the service rendered by Mr. Chas. B. Mead of the Kane County Publishing Company, who not only took the contract for the work at a figure which precluded profit but has given his personal attention to details.

The absence of some very familiar names from the Historical Sketch, which will perhaps strike some readers unpleasantly, was unavoidable. The time allowed to the paper was limited and many honored names were to have been mentioned at the afternoon session by a speaker who was at the last moment prevented from attending. A letter had also been promised from Col. Jno. C. Long of Chicago, touching upon the army life of Mr. Conant, but owing to a press of other matters Col. Long was unable to furnish it.

With the large faith that has made this record possible we give it forth to the circle of friends and relatives of the Geneva Society and to the larger world which it may, perchance, here and there reach.

T. H. EDDOWES,
FRANCES LEBARON,
GEORGE BRAYTON PENNEY.

GENEVA, November, 1892.

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“Love, labor, progress!—this the constant story
That God in Nature speaks:
Love, labor, progress!—this the tireless glory
Of the Eternal weeks!”

Sermon.

"SOME RELIGIOUS CHANGES IN FIFTY YEARS." PREACHED AT
THE OPENING OF THE CELEBRATION, FRIDAY EVENING,
JUNE 10TH, BY REV. W. W. FENN,

Pastor of the oldest Unitarian Society in Illinois, the Church of
the Messiah, Chicago, organized in 1836.

TEXT:—*The Way of the Lord is Strength.* Prov. 10:29.

AMONG the most suggestive phrases in Hebrew literature are those which imply that there is a way of the Lord, that there are paths in which the Almighty walks. Primitively, these expressions carried a significance quite different from that which we find in them, conveying merely the notion that there were certain spots which the Gods liked best to frequent; but as under the lead of the Prophets belief in a purposeful God bent on righteousness developed among the Jews, "the way of the Lord" came to have an ethical import which insures it a permanent place in our religious vocabulary. For us, the way of the Lord is the path along which humanity, quickened and guided by the indwelling God, has moved and is moving towards consummate holiness; he is walking with God who is advancing toward the perfect manifestation of truth and

love; he is working with God who is striving to bring men into the realm of spiritual facts and under the sway of spiritual forces, for thus God walks and works. Hence it behooves us, individually and corporately, to "consider our ways" that we may know whether they are the way of the Lord, whether our progress is in the track of advancing humanity. Amid the congratulations and rejoicings of this anniversary occasion, this serious duty should not be overlooked, for no greater blessing could come to pastor and people out of these days of reminiscence and communion than the settled conviction that this church in its teaching and practice has been walking with God. "The way of the Lord is strength."

"Thy way, O Lord, is in the sanctuary." It is in the church, or rather in the impalpable but very real "Christian consciousness" of the community, that we may seek most confidently and find most easily the course of the spirit. Therefore, complying with a request from one of the members of your Committee, I ask you to consider with me this evening some of the changes that have come over religious thought and life during the past half century, that we may discern if possible the general direction of movement. To-morrow, others shall speak particularly of this church and its history, but to-night we are to establish the criterion by which the work of the church must be determined. Our duty to-night is to discover if we may the way of the Lord, to-morrow it will become apparent, I trust, that that has been also the way of this church.

Not even the most casual observer can fail to discern a wide difference between the church as it is now and the church as it was fifty years ago. Although one had never heard a sermon or been inside of a church, he might guess even from the externals of church architect-

ure that the uses of the building had altered. Church edifices nowadays are evidently designed to be less formal, more social, home-like and inviting than they were fifty years ago. If, now, one compares the interiors of two churches, one built fifty years ago and the other just completed, the change is even more apparent. In the one case we should probably find only a large barren audience room, while in the other we should certainly see parlors and a kitchen, possibly also a reading room and a stage. As Brooke Herford has said, the proverb "As poor as a church mouse" was coined before kitchens had become an essential part of church architecture; nowadays church mice ought to be as plump and sleek as old time ecclesiastics considering the *debris* after our church festivals and fairs. And so the interior of the church deepens the impression made by the exterior that a change has come over our ideas as to the function and place of a church in the community. Then, even Sunday schools were not in full favor and the multifarious social activities of the modern church had not come into mind. Similarly, we may see how the place which a preacher is expected to occupy in a church has undergone marked alteration. Instead of a box-like, gloomy pulpit, stilted way above the heads of the congregation, there is now only a low platform with modest reading desk. The preacher of to-day must show the iron and clay of his makeup as well as the head of gold and shoulders of silver which formerly were alone visible over the enclosing and concealing pulpit. The Scripture reads "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills whence cometh my help"—not, I will lift up mine eyes unto the pulpit. In many a country church the Scripture used to be literally fulfilled when the youngsters, and some of the older folk, too, turning away from the preacher droning away overhead, looked up through the unshaded, small-paned windows to the distant

hills and drew from that quiet vision of beauty help which the pulpit denied them. One can not repress a suspicion that much of the stiff-neckedness for which our ancestors are sometimes blamed, and deservedly, perhaps, may be traced to those high pulpits which obliged them to hold their heads in tilted constraint during interminable sermons, till it is no wonder they got a permanent crick in the neck because of it. And who can blame them for being straight-backed considering the pews they had to sit in. The decadence of the skyey pulpit signifies that the preacher no longer speaks as from some inaccessible height of wisdom and sanctity which his people cannot hope to attain, but from their level; he no longer thinks of "preaching down" to his congregation.

In one of Homer Wilbur's screeds prefixed to the Bigelow Papers Lowell suggests that the visual angle made by a ray of light coming from a high pulpit to the eye of an auditor is such as to induce somnolence. The real reason, however, why people go to sleep in church is because they have no vital interest in what the preacher is saying; yet perhaps this real reason is not unconnected with the fanciful one proposed by the erudite pastor of Jaalam, for when a preacher draws near to his congregation and preaches to them eye to eye, it is inevitable that he should be led to speak of subjects in which they are interested and in a style which carries home. One secret of the effectiveness of the best modern preaching is that the preacher has got near enough to his people to "see the whites of their eyes." The speech of the street is becoming the speech of the pulpit that the thought of the pulpit may more promptly become the thought of the street. If a preacher to-day is so old-fashioned as to say—"My hearers"—the probability is that he might more truthfully say—"My slumberers;" they are absent-minded

if not absent-bodied. The thought of the pulpit is cast in a style vital and not conventional, real and not formal, suggestive rather than authoritative. And this implies that the thought of the pulpit is not quite what it used to be. Topics that were once the staple of pulpit discourse are now rarely alluded to. Your pastor is not half so much interested in the past of Israel as he is in the future of America; he deems it far less important to show that God could harden Pharaoh's heart and still be just and loving than to thunder into the ears of modern Pharaols of lust and greed—"Let my people go;" he is not so firmly convinced that Jonah could live in the whale's belly, as he is determined that present-day children of God shall not live in vile tenement houses; he will not seek to convince you that Baalam's ass spoke to the ancient prophet, but he will seek to open your ears to the appeal of the entire brute creation for sympathetic protection and kindness. The ideal of the modern sermon is perfectly given by Pres. Hyde of Bowdoin College in the current Forum. "A young preacher," he says, "once read me a sermon filled from beginning to end with abstract propositions about the proper relation of the soul to its maker. When he had finished, I said to him, that is a first rate sermon of its kind, but for every sermon of this kind, you ought to write one of the other kind. 'What other kind?' he asked. Why, I said, this is all about the way to save a soul. The other kind of sermon should show what use to make of the soul after it is saved; how the saved soul should behave in the home; how it should do business: how it can make the community happier and better; how to fulfill the duties of husband or wife, of father or son, of neighbor or friend, of workman or employer, of owner of wealth, of holder of office, of citizen or patriot." That "other kind" of sermon is indeed almost the only kind

that is preached in the foremost pulpits of America to-day and I hope it will not be declared fanciful if I suggest that nothing else could ever be preached, except from a pulpit far removed from a congregation. The change from pulpit to reading desks marks a change in the quality of sermons. A sermon can no longer be a narrow, shallow rivulet of an idea meandering aimlessly through flowery meads of rhetoric, it must be a mountain brook of fresh thought directed to the doing of the world's work. When the preacher came down from his factitious elevation to the level of his fellows, pulpit utterances acquired the human touch, became practical, clear, direct, and couched in the ordinary speech of men.

So much, then, for superficial change in the religious life of the past half century as revealed in church architecture and pulpit utterances, and now we must ask whether these are merely superficial or indicative of profound modifications in thought and sentiment. It occasionally happens that doctrines lapse for a time, which, nevertheless, are still an integral part of the prevailing system and only await an opportune moment for reappearance. During such periods, it may seem as if the beliefs in question were no longer held, whereas in reality they still belong to the current theology and are only in abeyance. Consequently what pass at face value for great religious reformations are often only shifting of emphasis, while the structure of doctrine or polity remains the same. At the present time, for instance, in the so-called Evangelical churches, a prominence is given the humanity of Jesus which once would have been deemed subversive and dangerous, nevertheless the doctrine of his deity is by no means denied but is in fact constantly assumed. Are the changes which we have already mentioned and others which doubtless have occurred to you, changes of this

sort or are they evidences of real growth and progress?

One who compares carefully and candidly the Orthodoxy of to-day with that of fifty years ago, as represented by its leading exponents then and now, will have to conclude not only that there is hardly a single doctrine which has escaped alteration, but that there has been a radical and all important change in the point of view and method of approach. For the sake of illustration, let us refer briefly to four leading doctrines of Orthodoxy—its thought concerning the Bible, man, salvation and God.

1st. The Authority of Scripture. It was Chillingworth who said—"The Bible and the Bible only is the religion of Protestants." The testimony of the Bible was decisive and its judgment final. Theological disputes turned upon the interpretations of texts whose infallibility, when their meaning was ascertained, neither party questioned. But the leading Evangelicals to-day, men like Briggs, Gladden, Abbott and Ladd, have entirely abandoned the claim of Biblical infallibility, while Prof. Ladd of Yale College, in setting up the "Christian consciousness" as the ultimate criterion, seems to have reverted substantially to the Roman Catholic view. Preachers and theologians are not content with proving that a doctrine is Biblical, they deem it incumbent upon them also to show that it is rational or at least not irrational. Nor is this position maintained only by a few heretics in Orthodox circles, who are called leaders merely because they happen to be conspicuous by reason of their heresy. That they fairly represent the acting opinion of the rank and file appears from the treatment that has been accorded the Revised Version of the Bible. Let me recall a few of the changes in the New Testament alone.

The favorite and only decisive proof text for the doctrine of the Trinity—that concerning the three Witnesses—has

dropped away without even a note of explanation or apology, and doubt has been thrown upon "the church of God which he purchased with his own blood," as well as upon the identification of Jesus with God in the doxology in Romans. On the other hand, the personality of the Devil is recognized in the Lord's prayer and it is intimated in John 1, 18 that Jesus is called "God only begotten." Such changes, and these are but samples, would have been greeted with mingled glee and acrimony a half century ago; as it is, they have been given hardly a passing thought. There can be no question, I suppose, that the movement in Orthodoxy is toward viewing the Bible as literature, open to correction and amendment and by no means as infallible, or even final authority. And if reason is to be applied to the Biblical records, the outcome is not doubtful. As the testimony of Genesis with relation to the six days creation is no longer allowed to invalidate the witness of Geology, so the record of the miraculous birth of Jesus will soon cease to be of sufficient authority to overthrow the presuppositions of experience and the contradictory hints elsewhere in the Gospels and Epistles. One is tempted to dwell long upon this changed attitude towards the Bible because of its immense significance, but time forbids. Let me quote, however, a single passage from an unimpeachable authority—Prof. J. Henry Thayer, Prof. of N. T. Greek in Harvard University, whose judgment has weight, not only from his ripe and accurate scholarship, but also because he is an Orthodox in conviction as well as in ecclesiastical standing: "The critics are agreed," he says, "that the view of the Scripture in which you and I were educated, the view that has been prevalent here in New England for centuries is untenable." The critics have found it so, the people feel it so; silently the change has come, no book or preacher

has wrought it, but it has come and its influence upon our religious thinking is well-nigh incalculable.

2nd. The Doctrine of Man. Along with the crumbling belief in Biblical infallibility has gone a change in the thought of man, for concerning the creation and primitive condition of man the teachings of the Old Testament and of modern investigation are irreconcilably at variance. It is taught in the Bible that man was brought into being by a special creative act of God; that he was created holy, but by one act of disobedience lost that holiness and passed into a state of alienation from God, of which physical death is the token, in which all his descendants were involved. Upon this Biblical preaching rest the Evangelical doctrines of the fall of man and his consequent inability to think truly or act rightly until after he has been regenerated by the Spirit. As logical inferences came the belief that revelation and salvation must come from without as gifts to an unworthy race and not from within as finest fruits of a perfecting humanity, and the pernicious notion that since the truth of God was alien to the nature of unregenerate man, the "*carnal reason*" was utterly incompetent as a test of truth. "*Credo quia impossibile,*" I believe because it is impossible. The more monstrous what passed for revealed truth seemed to the natural instincts of man, the more depraved those instincts were thereby shown to be.

On the other hand, competent scholars tell us now that man is the consummate product of a long development through the animal world, that his noblest powers so far from being decaying relics of a purer past, are brightening prophecies of a glorious future. I need not linger here to point out how this thought of man introduces a totally new point of view and requires a totally different method of approach in our religious thinking, but I would

assure you that this new thought of man of which I have been speaking is not the whimsey of a few disgruntled "scientists" animated by "hostility" to the Bible and the church, but is the deliberate conclusion of every living student of nature, qualified to have any opinion at all upon the subject. In the "New World" for June I find this sentence in an article by Minot Savage:—"In a private letter to myself, dated Oct. 29, 1890, Mr. John Fiske writes, 'I do not know of any living scientific man of any account opposed to Darwinism as a whole, though of course there is, as there ought to be, much diversity as to subsidiary questions.' " Quite apart, however, from scholarly research and opinion, the old belief about man has been practically disowned, as Dr. Hale has shown, by our practice in citizenship and education. As the foliage on the branches of a tree keeps green long after the tree itself has been girdled, so some of the inferences from this discredited theory still persist, though their real vitality is gone. Here again as in the case of beliefs concerning the Bible, the change is due not so much to the publication of any epoch-making book, whether Spencer's "First Principles" or Darwin's "Origin of Species," as to the gradual and imperceptible transformation of popular sentiment. But the change has undeniably come and its effect upon our religious life is central and far-reaching.

3rd. The Doctrine of Salvation. Hitherto we have considered doctrines which may be classed as speculative and which, while they affect vitally the thought of the church, may have nothing to do with its practical work, but in the doctrine of salvation we pass directly from theory to practice, for from the beginning until now the church has felt the salvation of men to be its distinguishing function. If, therefore, the conception of salvation changes, the activities of the church must pass through a

corresponding modification. When man was believed to be in a state of alienation from God because of Adam's transgression, and the work of the church was to bring man and God into a state of reconciliation, the idea of salvation was mechanical and the method, by the vicarious atonement, was also formal. But with the incoming of the new thought of man, the idea of salvation has become vital. Salvation requires not change of state, but change of character. Sin is not so much an insult to God as a wrong done one's own nature. Hence forgiveness of sins cannot be a merely judicial act, it must be the restoration of the spirit and temper lost in transgression. Hence it would hardly be said now that a man's morality or immorality has nothing to do with his salvation. On the contrary it is generally held that, to quote a famous Orthodox clergyman, "righteousness is salvation." From every quarter comes the demand for character and not creed. Even staunch Evangelicals will say sometimes of a man—"He's a good christian,"—thinking simply of his conduct and not at all of his theology. Where the uncouth Evangelist from Georgia cries "Quit your meanness" he is at one with the gentle Quaker poet, who sings—

"To be saved is only this,
Salvation from our selfishness."

Consequently the way of salvation is not now presented as of old. That Jesus suffered upon the cross the agonies that the elect would have suffered, but for him, through the unending aeons of hell seems a belief too monstrous to be entertained for a moment, yet it was taught once. But that vulgar commercialism has gone forever. That death scene on Calvary, we are told by Orthodox preachers, was designed to melt the heart of man, not to appease the wrath of God; it was a matchless setting forth of God's love of man and hate of sin. The death of

Christ avails for our salvation only as it leads us to a like self-sacrifice. Identification instead of substitution is now the word and we hear of imparted instead of imputed righteousness. And as the ideas of the nature of the way of salvation have altered, there have come glimmerings of the revolutionary thought that the work of the church is the education of the sons of God and not the conversion of sons of the Devil.

4th. The thought of God. That the old teaching concerning the method of salvation seems repulsive to us nowadays is mainly, I fancy, because of the thought of God that lay back of it. God, the Father, seemed to be full of wrath, a Shylock bound to have the full measure of his bond, if not from the man who had sinned, then from an innocent and august substitute. Wrath seemed to be embodied in the Father, mercy and tenderness in the Son. Men shuddered as they repeated "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," apparently quite unmindful that the Hebrew, living before the revelation of God in the face of Jesus, had prayed "Let me fall into the hands of God and not into the hands of man." But now God is drawing ever nearer to the world in love, and the loving Father, who welcomes every returning prodigal with tenderness eternal, is becoming the God of Christendom. Nowhere is the change more manifest than in the hymns of the church.

Merely for the sake of illustration, let me read you two hymns found in psalmodies that were in vogue fifty years ago and contrast them with two hymns taken from a modern collection. That the older hymns are revolting to the staunchest Orthodoxy of to-day, I am perfectly well aware as well as that it would be easy to find other hymns of the same period which breathe in lofty strains the noblest ideas of God. Yet the thought of God presented in

these hymns was held and taught to the horror of many souls. It is with no design of ridiculing the faith of the past, but with profound pity for those whose lives were overshadowed by such frightful fears, and with deep gratitude that nearly all churches have awakened from such horrible dreams to more trustful thoughts of God, that I read two hymns by Watts with which many of you must be already familiar:

"My thoughts on awful subjects roll,
 Damnation and the dead;
What horrors seize the guilty soul
 Upon a dying bed!

Then swift and dreadful she descends
 Down to the fiery coast,
Amongst abominable fiends;
 Herself a frightened ghost.

There endless crowds of sinners lie,
 And darkness makes their chains;
Tortured with keen despair, they cry,
 Yet wait for fiercer pains."

Compare, or rather contrast, with this Anna Waring's beautiful hymn—

"Go not far from me, O my God,
 Whom all my times obey;
Take from me anything thou wilt,
 But go not thou away,—
And let the storm that does thy work
 Deal with me as it may!

On thy compassion I repose
 In weakness and distress;
I will not ask for greater ease,
 Lest I should love thee less.
Oh, 'tis a blessed thing for me
 To need thy tenderness!

When I am feeble as a child,
 And flesh and heart give way,
Then on thy everlasting strength
 With passive trust I stay,—
And the rough wind becomes a song,
 The darkness shines like day.

Deep unto deep may call, but I
 With peaceful heart can say,
 Thy loving kindness hath a charge
 No waves can take away;
 Then let the storm that speeds me home
 "Deal with me as it may!"

One dreads to turn from this lyric strain of trust and hope to read another hymn by Watts which as I have been credibly informed was actually sung by Evangelical congregations fifty years ago.

"Far in the deep, where darkness dwells,
 The land of horror and despair,
 Justice has built a dismal hell
 And laid her stores of vengeance there.

Eternal plagues and heavy chains,
 Tormenting racks and fiery coals,
 And darts t' inflict immortal pains
 Dyed in the blood of damned souls.

There Satan the first sinner lies
 And roars and bites his iron bands,
 In vain the rebel strives to rise
 Crushed with the weight of both thy hands.

There guilty ghosts of Adam's race
 Shriek out and howl beneath thy rod;
 Once they could scorn a Savior's grace
 But they incensed a dreadful God.

Tremble my soul and kiss the Son!
 Sinner, obey thy Savior's call;
 Else your damnation hastens on
 And hell gapes wide to wait your fall."

With the thought of God and the future thought in this hymn, what can offer more significant contrast than Chadwick's beautiful song:

"It singeth low in every heart,
 We hear it each and all,—
 A song of those who answer not,
 However we may call.

They throng the silence of the breast;
We see them as of yore,—
The kind, the true, the brave, the sweet,
Who walk with us no more.

'Tis hard to take the burden up,
When these have laid it down:
They brightened all the joy of life,
They softened every frown.
But, oh! 'tis good to think of them
When we are troubled sore;
Thanks be to God that such have been,
Although they are no more!

More homelike seems the vast unknown,
Since they have entered there;
To follow them were not so hard,
Wherever they may fare.
They cannot be where God is not,
On any sea or shore;
Whate'er betides, thy love abides,
Our God for evermore!"

Thanks be to God that out of the flame shot shadows of Hell the world has emerged upon the gentle slope that leads to the light that crowns with ineffable radiance the home-land of the soul. Thank God that the "awful rose of dawn" now touches with celestial beauty the limit which all our feet must over-pass, where hung once curtaining storm clouds of wrath eternal. Henceforth let none step into the unknown with fear, since we have learned to trust there as well as here the love from which not even our sins can permanently separate us. "Help for the living and hope for the dead" is the word of the modern church because we have learned of God, who worketh unceasingly and forever that he may bring love to perfect manifestation.

From our consideration of the doctrines formerly held and those which now prevail in Orthodox circles concerning the Bible, man, salvation and God, it appears unmistakably that the superficial changes which we notice

at the outset are not accidental but symptomatic. They are outcrops and not boulders. That aloofness of religion from the rest of life which we saw expressed in church architecture and in the ideal of church and minister, found its inner correspondence in doctrines which vanished the instant that a demand for unity penetrated religious thinking. The doctrines to which we have referred were tenable only because they were deemed so sacred as to be beyond the scope of criticism. The feeling for unity would brook no contradictions in the nature of God; his wrath and his love must be one; his revelation in the world could not contradict his revelation in the Bible; if man was able to discern the truth of God as revealed in Nature, he was able also to discern God in the more immediate workings of the Spirit. All the changes that have come in Theology are traceable to the growing conviction that God is one, that the world is one because the expression and revelation of God, that man is one because he is of the world and only a more perfect manifestation of the Divine unity. If this interpretation of religious changes is correct, we shall expect to find two things: first, that the world has been growing more religious, for the demand for unity is only another name for the consciousness of God; and, secondly, that the changes in other departments of life are traceable to the same source, for religion is only one phase of man's mentality and shares his intellectual fortunes. As regards the first, it is noteworthy that the changes which have been mentioned have come from within the church and not from without it. The new thought of the Bible, for instance, has been reached by men intent only upon the truth, men, for the most part, whose fine religious feeling is apparent on every page of their writings. No one can doubt that the new ideas are more purely and deeply religious than the

old. Never was there more devotion to high ideals than now, never was there truer, more searching or self-sacrificing love of man than now, never was the trust in the eternal goodness more wide and firm, never, in a word, was the world more religious than it is to-day. Indubitably the movement has been not a human drifting into evil, but a divine steering towards goodness. And the religious movement is but one embodiment of that magnificent inflow of the consciousness and craving for unity, which will make our generation memorable forever. In the arts, all our inventions and discoveries have tended to bring men together. The railroad, the steam-boat, the telegraph annihilate separating space. That Joshua made the sun stand still upon Gibeon seems trifling compared with modern achievements: we make the sun stand still, yes even go back on the dial, over our thought entrusted to electricity, and perhaps it may stand still sometime, in like manner, over our bodies as we travel from East to West. This has become a very small world within fifty years and all men are next door neighbors. Aided possibly by the mechanical unifying, the idea of unity prevails in industry and in the theories of government. As co-operation is the rule in manufacturing, so that no man worketh for himself and no man idleth to himself, making the factory the unit with the several workmen as constituent cells, so in government the nation and not the individual is gaining recognition as the ultimate unit. In this country two theories of government have prevailed, one conceiving the nation, the other the individual state as unit, and it was no accident, but an inevitable incident in a great world process that the two theories joined battle in our civil war and that the national idea was victorious. We shall learn sometime to extend our national idea until it becomes international, ac-

knowledging in practice as in theory the brotherhood of man. Towards that, the Spirit of God manifested in the craving for unity, is now tending; ethical systems are based upon it, socialism asserts it. In sociology the unitary idea is supreme. Of course, it would be needless to prove that it lords it in science likewise. The unity of force is a fundamental tenet of modern science. And if force is one, it acts according to like laws in all spheres of its operation. Hence the unity of law is a necessary corollary to the unity of force. "The hot vapors of hydrogen and calcium on the surface of the sun" obey the same laws as the cyclone that sweeps over our Western prairies. Man is no longer, as of old, separated from the rest of nature by an unbridged gulf. We are living in a universe. Thus everywhere, the last fifty years have been signalized by an increasing demand for unity which has appeared in the church also. This, then, is the way of the Lord, this has been the course of the spirit, and every church, to the degree that it has been the herald and prophet of that unity, has been in the way of the Lord, wherein lies its strength.

While the whole church has responded to the new voice of the Spirit and has moved forward in the way of its directing, we may well be proud that the part of the church universal to which we belong has been in the van of the movement. Fifty years ago, Channing died. Guided by the spirit, he had seen and taught the unity of God and the dignity of man as a child of God, and hence able to discover and know the truth of God. All our early Unitarian thought rested upon those fundamental beliefs. But our perception of unity was, as yet, incomplete. Somewhat over fifty years ago, in a sermon before the graduating class of Harvard Divinity school, Dr. A. P. Peabody explicitly refused the title Christian Minis-

ter to anyone who denied the trustworthiness of the Gospel account of the miracles of Jesus, and Charles Lowe, while student in the Divinity school, testified in his private diary to his horror and apprehension when his Professor, Dr. Noyes, threw doubt upon the reality of the Deluge. The Bible was still regarded as final and supreme authority. But even before Channing died, signs of the new day appeared. Two of the rosy fingers of dawn were Emerson's Divinity school address in 1838 and Theodore Parker's South Boston sermon in 1841. These men, although disowned by the Unitarians of their time, were prophets of a more perfect realization of unity in religion, and in their inspiration and along the paths which they indicated, our church has followed the lead of the spirit still in the van of advancing Christendom, proclaiming with growing clearness and strength —

“That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves.”

“The way of the Lord is strength.” As a denomination, we are few in numbers and weak in influence, but our strength lies in the fact that we are in the way of the Lord, heralds of the unity of the world in the love eternal. If we ever fear for our denominational future, that fear is only the obverse of our absolute trust in our principles and our perfect faith in the inspiration of the church universal as the leader of humanity. Would to God that our mission as a separate body of the Church of God might speedily terminate. Would that our sister churches dared put more trust in God and commit themselves fully to the guidance of the Spirit. Meanwhile we stand, nay we move, still in the way of the Lord, strong in the consciousness that we are walking with God, and pledged

only to that purity of heart and openness of mind which alone make us worthy of the name we love best to bear—
The Church of the Holy Spirit.

Order of Proceedings.

On the second day of the celebration, Saturday, June 11, the friends and members of the Society assembled in the church at 10:30 a. m. Mr. J. D. Harvey presided and the following order of exercises were followed:

Address of Welcome, - - - - Rev. Geo. B. Penney
Paper:—Historical Sketch, - - - - Rev. T. H. Eddowes
Singing:—Anniversary Hymn, written by Jas. H. West
Paper:—Character Sketch of First Pastor, Miss Frances LeBaron
Singing:—Dedication Hymn, written by Eben Conant.

Owing to lack of time the following papers which are included in the published proceedings were not read.

Incidents and Reminiscences, - - - - Rev. L. C. Kelsey
Random Reminiscences, - - - - Mrs. Julia Dodson Sheppard
Memories of Early Days, - - - - Mrs. Maria Le Baron Turner

At the close of the morning session an adjournment was taken to the home of Mr. Harvey where a collation was served by the ladies, after which all gathered on the lawn in the shade of the trees and with Mr. Penney in the chair responses were made and letters read as follows:

A Cambrian Prophet,	- - - -	Rev. Jenkin Lloyd Jones
A Man without Guile,	- - - -	Mrs. J. D. Harvey
Other Pioneers,	- - - -	Rev. T. B. Forbush
Letter,	- - - -	Robert Collyer
Early Women,	- - - -	Mrs. Mary P. Jarvis
The Original Geneva,	- - - -	Mr. B. W. Dodson
Poem:—Fifty Years,	- - - -	Mrs. Julia Dodson Sheppard
Letter,	- - - -	Rev. Jno. R. Effinger
Letter,	- - - -	Prof. Samuel Clark
Cui Bono?	- - - -	Rev. T. G. Milsted
A Living Saint,	- - - -	Mrs. J. D. Harvey
Response,	- - - -	Rev. T. H. Eddowes
Letter,	- - - -	Rev. Chester Covell
The Illinois Conference,	- - - -	Rev. L. J. Duncan
Letter,	- - - -	Rev. Jas. H. West
Freedom of Thought and Speech,	- - - -	Rev. Thos. P. Byrnes
Woman's Relation to Religious Freedom,	- - - -	Mrs. Celia P. Woolley
The Literary Value of the Liberal Faith,	- - - -	Mr. Forrest Crissey
The Centennial Celebration,	- - - -	Rev. Jas. Vila Blake

Address Of Welcome.

BY REV. GEO. B. PENNEY, PASTOR OF THE SOCIETY SINCE
JANUARY, 1892.

AN address of welcome always seems to me a useless formality and especially does it seem so on this occasion. It is as though a family of children had left the home circle and gone out into the world and in after years, ripe with the experiences of life, they should come back to the home of their youth to talk over old times and to plan for the future; and it is as though as they approach the threshold made sacred by associations and with hearts touched by memories of those who will not return, they should be met with an "address of welcome" at their own fireside by someone who has less right to be there than they have.

But welcome is a gracious word when spoken from the heart, and I assure you that in the time of preparation for this celebration our hearts have been full of welcome to all who should be with us; and in behalf of the members and friends of the First Unitarian Society of Geneva, I welcome you, first to Geneva, to our pure air and bright sunlight. I welcome you to our homes, assuring you that in accepting our hospitality you leave us the debtors; and I welcome you most of all to your share in this celebration, which shall be, with us, to recall the memory of those who have gone before, whose lives, nobly lived, have made this society what it is to-day. In a word I welcome you to this celebration which is a bond between the past and the present, and still more binds the past and present to the future, the future, not of two or four score years and ten, but the future that reaching beyond this life turns our thought to that other glad reunion in the realm of love and peace.

Historical Sketch.

BY REV. T. H. EDDOWES, PASTOR OF THE SOCIETY 1865 TO '70.

Organization.

THE first meeting to consider the matter of organizing a church was held May 8, 1842. Mr. Conant, in his journal, notes that "considerable hesitation and doubt whether the proper time had come was manifested by some. A declaration of principles for the formation of a society on the ground of a common Christian faith without regard to the opinions which distinguished the different denominations of Christians, had been drawn up and circulated, and about twenty names obtained, but the proposed society was something different from the old religious associations, and the subject was reserved for consideration until another meeting." May 29, he notes the first communion service in Geneva, thirteen persons uniting in it. Then June 12,—"formed a society with the name of the First Christian Congregation of Geneva. There were very few present at the formation of the society, and the prospect of maintaining our existence as a society was rather dubious."

The first entry in the society is under date of June 5,

of a meeting of those friendly to the formation of a society in which 'all Christians may unite for religious purposes,' which was held at the Court House. This entry notes the first communion as taking place on this date, instead of May 29, as Mr. Conant's journal has it.

The record for June 12 is very short and only notes that, "the declaration was read by the chairman, Mr. Conant, and the purposes and principles of the society explained," probably by Mr. Conant. "On motion of Chas. Patten, seconded by S. N. Clark, the declaration was unanimously adopted." The meeting adjourned to June 26, when the declaration was again commented on and the constitution generally discussed, at the close of which each of the twelve articles were separately adopted. On motion of Scotto Clark, seconded by Samuel Sterling, both were adopted. The names attached to this constitution under date of July 2, are those of Scotto Clark, Mrs. S. A. Clark, (Mrs. Scotto) Augustus H. Conant, Mrs. B. M. Conant, (Mrs. A. H.) Samuel K. Whiting, Mary J. G. Whiting, Charles Patten, Mrs. Harriet F. Patten, Samuel N. Clark, Miss P. H. Patten, (afterwards Mrs. S. N. Clark) T. L. Cleveland, Mrs. Olivia Cleveland, Samuel Sterling, Mrs Cornelia Sterling, James Carr, Peter Sears, Chas. S. Clark, Mrs. Betsey Stelle Carr, Miss Susan S. Carr, Miss Fayette R. Churchill, Mrs. Harriet N. Dodson. These entries are not signatures but are probably copies of those attached to the declaration of principles mentioned as "circulated" in Mr. Conant's journal.

The declaration begins as follows: "The undersigned, being desirous of promoting practical Godliness in the world, and of aiding each other in their moral and religious improvement, have associated themselves together, not as agreeing in opinion, not as having attained universal truth in belief, or perfection in character: but as seek-

ers after truth and goodness, relying on God as their support and aid, Jesus Christ as their teacher and Saviour, and the sacred scriptures as their guide, and adopting the New Testament as their rule of faith and practice. Believing in God as a Father and acknowledging their obligations of love and obedience to him and to Jesus Christ as his Ambassador, and recognizing as brethren, the whole human family, and as Christians, all who manifest the spirit of Christ."

Then follow the further declarations, that they "regard a conscientious observance of the ordinance of baptism as enjoined by Jesus Christ to be the duty of all who believe the gospel and would yield obedience to its requirements." Then follows the declaration that "they esteem it a high privilege to observe the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and that they would joyfully extend the same privilege to all who feel a sincere desire to commemorate the Saviour's love." Finally: "and believing further that meetings for religious instruction and sacred worship are not only enjoined in the sacred scriptures, but are highly conducive to religious improvement; they determine to use all just and reasonable endeavors to sustain such meetings on the first day of the week and other suitable occasions, and to accomplish the object and maintain the principles set forth in this declaration, they have under the motto of Liberty, Holiness, Love, adopted the following constitution." We who are familiar with the terms of our declaration, do not realize just what it was to some of those who signed it. There were people of as widely differing creeds as the Presbyterians and the Unitarians whose names are attached. To us the declaration that they have associated themselves together, not as agreeing in opinion, seems the most natural thing possible. To them it was the saving clause that allowed them

to join forces with all the other moral and religious elements of the community, for the common good, without in the least comprising their peculiar beliefs in matters of doctrine. So literally was their position understood among themselves that, when removed from Geneva, or nearer to the churches of their peculiar faiths, or even when they found other churches willing to admit them to membership without saying much about their individual opinions, they felt that there was no inconsistency in uniting with such. So it happens that members of this society were or are also members of the Methodist, Baptist, Orthodox Congregational, and I suppose, still other communions. I am told that there was a feeling among them that in signing this paper they were not uniting with a church but only joining a society; a feeling which was afterwards confirmed by the custom which was then followed of administering the form of baptism, and that of a public profession, to some whose names were upon this roll, but not to all.

As late as 1855 Mr. Conant began keeping a parish record in which he noted the names and occupations of each of those whom he considered as being in his parish and among the other data, he notes their denominational connections, and puts down Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Romanists, Lutherans, Universalists, Scotch Seceders and one as "Quakerish." The church record contains the names in various offices and on committees of persons who were afterward connected with the other churches of the town. In the days when the pews were rented the name of each tenant on a printed slip was attached and it struck me as very strange when I came in 1865 to see such names as Mayburn, Wells, Hollister and others among them, as those persons were then connected with the other churches of the place.

The first article of the constitution announces the title of the society, as that of "First Christian Congregation of Geneva." The second says, "All persons who are sincerely desirous of promoting the objects of the society may become members." As originally adopted, no condition of observance of any form, or signature was called for. In 1870 this article was amended to read, "may become members by signing this constitution." December 14, 1845, Article XIII was adopted which might be construed as in some measure modifying the declaration. It reads: "The land and the house of religious worship of which the First Christian Congregation have come in possession in the use of funds received through the treasurer of the American Unitarian Association from the Unitarian Society in Roxbury, Mass., of which Rev. George Putnam is pastor, and others aiding them, and of funds contributed by members of the First Christian Congregation, and others, for the purposes to which they have been applied, and appropriated to the purpose and object of advancing and diffusing the truths and doctrines of Unitarian Christianity and of the declaration of the First Christian Congregation, according to the laws of the state of Illinois concerning religious societies."

In 1870 Article VI was amended by specifying that the officers of the society should be elected for one year and until their successors were elected. Article X was made to read: "This constitution may be altered or amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any regular meeting." In 1884 the declaration and constitution were so changed and amended to stand as at the present time. The principal change is in the declaration, by which all reference to any belief or form is excluded. This was not done because the society does not believe anything, but because it was thought sufficient to put

its basis on the simple ground of sympathy in the desire for and work of promoting practical goodness in the world and of aiding each other in moral and religious improvement. Broad as the declaration was for the day in which it was written, it was found that the observance of the forms of baptism and the Lord's Supper, which it asserted to be the duty of believers to observe, had practically fallen into disuse. It was also apparent that in the ordinary course of events, beliefs must so change that no statement of opinion or creed could possibly cover the beliefs of any progressive society for all time. It was also seen that people could unite for the promotion of practical goodness, who had widely differing views in religious and theological matters.

Personal.

I find that Maine, Vermont, Connecticut, Rhode Island and New York were all represented in the organization of the society. Massachusetts sent out the Clarks and Pattens, who represented the cultivated Boston Unitarianism of that date. A Unitarianism which accepted miracles, the miraculous birth among them, and which had not made itself very clear as to the future state of punishment and reward; but it was the most advanced thought of its day, and as far as it had gone, as true to our moving spirit of rationalism as the most advanced type of to-day. It was the same spirit that was so native to all New England, that when the Carrs from Maine also came with their freer but no less refined ideals of social life, and the Conants from Vermont, with their Puritan standards and old time sturdiness in their ability to give a reason for the faith that was in them, they naturally fused into a whole as the First Christian Congregation of Geneva. Clarks, Carrs and Conants, a trinity of Cs, that suggests that

they had also a trinitarian combination of culture, courage, and constancy that brought about the Unitarian result which we celebrate so gratefully to-day.

As may be seen by our society record and the history of the town, the Episcopalians were early on the ground, and Mrs. Patten, (Miss H. Clark,) told me that it was a matter of very serious consideration with her father's family, whether they ought not to work with them. I understand that it was only because they thought the liberal basis would reach more people, that they did not organize an Episcopal church.

We now come to the grateful task of recalling the characters of the leading spirits in this devout and courageous band. While all were worthy of special mention, time will permit of only a few being so brought forward.

First comes Scotto Clark. Coming to the place about 1837, in middle life or later, to retrieve the fortune he had lost in the east, he seems to have been of the New England type which we know so well, with its intelligence, its moral worth and its matter-of-course loyalty to its standards of conviction and duty. I have not succeeded in finding any reminiscences of him that would bring him before us in a vivid way. The most I can tell you about him is the respectful tone in which he is always mentioned, and the often reiterated assertion that the foundation of the society was owing to him, and the fact that he seems to have been the one to whom the younger people turned as to their mutual leader in the enterprise. It certainly was not with money that he founded the church, but with the stronger foundation stones of a noble character, a fine devotion and a bold determination to do simply all that lay in his power for the establishment of a church for the good of the society. His name heads the list of men's signatures to the declarations as copied in the

record. It appears first in the proceedings of the society as chairman of the building committee that was chosen to supervise the erection of this house. He was chairman of the committee on parish library and in September 1843 was elected one of the trustees.

Under date of October 13, 1844, Mr. Conant writes in his journal: "Preached the funeral discourse of Mr. Scotto Clark, a worthy and efficient member of my society, one of my most zealous friends and supporters, and who was chiefly instrumental in procuring my settlement in Geneva. In the death of Mr. Clark, our village has lost one of its best citizens. A public spirited, upright, judicious and useful man. His hospitality and kindness of heart endeared him to a large circle of acquaintances, and his strict integrity and conscientiousness inspired respect and confidence in those who best knew his character." Only seven years had he lived in the place, his death occurring in little more than two years after the founding of the society.

Mrs. Clark lived till 1870. She was in every way a woman fitted to be the wife of such a man. There is the same respectful mention of her and the same lack of the specific instances that would have brought her character before us in a lifelike way. In her latest years she withdrew from society altogether owing to the infirmities of age. Though she lived five years after I came to Geneva, I met her only once. Soon after my coming her interest in the new minister led her to exchange a few words with me. As I recall the venerable figure and the intense earnestness of the face, it comes to me to-day that it was a privilege to look into it; and through the clasp of her hand, surely there might have come an influence that made me a kind of apostolic successor to those who had labored so devotedly for the cause we both loved.

It was indeed a beautiful hand if what one does gives a higher beauty to that member than the accident of physical proportion.

The one record of a specific action of her's which we have left is of the time she lived with her son Charles in Elgin, about 1849. A colony of Swedes landed there, and before they could find shelter, were attacked by the cholera. Mrs. Clark went to their help when others stood aloof, and ministered to them in spite of the difficulties of communicating with them; and one of the items of the story tells us, how one woman died holding her bible in one hand and Mrs. Clark's hand in the other, and with a smile on her face. When I came here in 1865, it was said, that as the result of that beneficence, the Swedes would do anything for the Clark family. I well remember how her sympathetic interest in church life prompted her to send me messages from time to time through Mrs. Patten, though she would never see me.

It is natural to pass from so worthy a mother to her equally worthy daughters. It is easy to understand what a satisfaction it must have been to the parents to know that that they were leaving their work to be carried on by such devoted children as Mrs. Harriet Patten, Mrs. Caroline Wilson and Mrs. Ellen Davis. It is good to know that so many who hear me to-day, can recall with me, without help of my weak words, the devotion of these women to this church. It was my fortune to be the last pastor under whom they were fully active in their congenial work. I had not been twenty-four hours in the town before I was told that this is a "woman's church," and it did not take me long to find out that it was the devotion of these two sisters that gave it that name. They were indeed well seconded by Mrs. Dodson, Mrs. LeBaron, Miss Carr, Mrs. Cleveland, and later, Mrs. Whiting,

Mrs. Larrabee, Mrs. Geo. Patten, and others whose names are only a memory to the older members. One felt that Mrs. Wilson's ideals were of the highest, and her constant aim was to have for her church the best that could be found or afforded. Mrs. Patten's enthusiasm for Unitarianism was not long in making itself felt. I remember hearing her call herself a "bigoted" Unitarian. But though she might use the term to express her sense of devotion to the cause, we know that bigotry was impossible to her broad charity, warm heart and intelligent mind. The beautiful hospitality of her home to all who might come in the name of Unitarianism makes her memory a fragrant one in the hearts of every one so fortunate as to be her guest. It was a home which might be said to be consecrated to the use of the church, so generous was her entertainment, so frequent the use of the home for church gatherings of all kinds. Mrs. Davis gave as heartily as her two sisters, of her home and talents to the use of the society, but her marriage was followed by a change of residence which prevented so long a devotion to the church as the others gave.

Unique among the women of this society, and indeed of any society, stands the name of Miss Susan Sophia Carr, one of the original signers who is with us to-day; the only one who has never lost her interest or slackened her work in all these fifty years. The others by death or removal terminated their active interest but, when her removal to her brother's farm at Batavia compelled her to give up the Sunday School class she had taught from the beginning, she still, by her dainty needle work and active assistance during fairs and special occasions, kept herself in touch with the society. Upon her return, after four years absence, she became as before one of the most active in her attendance at church, and in the aid society where

her work is always in demand, on account of her beautiful stitches; besides which, she has always contributed generously from her very limited income. It is rarely that a church can show a record like this, of fifty years of uninterrupted and enthusiastic devotion to its interests, especially in this western world where change is the order of the day.

I purposely omitted from the list of seconders of these two the name of Mrs. S. N. Clark, because it belongs not among those who seconded but with those who were seconded. In one sense this church building is her monument. In another place is mention of the part she took in obtaining the money in Boston and Roxbury which secured the erection of this house. On her account I look forward with regret to the day which is almost sure to come, when the society shall feel that it needs another building. I wish to suggest here, that when that time does come no building should be erected as a church for the use of this society without having somewhere on its walls a memorial of Polly H. Clark; not alone because she was so strongly instrumental in the building of its first house of worship, but because that was but the beginning of a devotion to the interests of this society which was all the more earnest for its unobtrusiveness. Her means, her time and strength were amply given to further our interests. I do not think I go beyond the requirements of delicacy of feeling in saying that the interest she showed in the church during the last ten or fifteen years of her active connection with it was, I suspect, to her a tender memorial of her husband, Samuel Nye Clark.

Coming to the town in the first flush of what his after life showed must have been a consecrated manhood, he has left behind a record of one of the noblest characters which has ennobled and sanctified the name of this

church. That she was the fitting wife for such a man is all that need be said of her. She has been described as a woman who always lamented that she was not able to do more, and thinking it not wise to attempt this or that enterprise in church matters, ended by doing more than anyone else, showing the forethought and wisdom that resulted, as one has said of her, in her being "the one who filled the lamps and saw that everything was brought" that was needed on all special occasions.

When I came here nine years after Mr. Clark's death I never heard his memory revived without tenderness or his name mentioned without allusion to the saintliness of his character and his devotedness to the church. Of this last the church record fortunately gives full evidence as the entries of the first twelve years are in his handwriting; the last being made only a fortnight before the date of his funeral as recorded in Mr. Conant's diary.

He says of him there, briefly and feelingly, under date of July 22, 1856. "Attended the funeral of Brother S. N. Clark, my Sunday School Superintendent and my intimate and dear friend. The loss to me and to the society in the death of Brother Clark is irreparable. He was a model of manly and christian excellence. One whose presence was a benediction and whose life made earth more like heaven. God be thanked that he lived among us."

It is a matter of satisfaction to know that one of Mr. Clark's sons has served the society as Sunday School Superintendent and the other as trustee and in business committees. His grandchildren have been pupils in the school he worked for so long.

A friend has handed me the following note which appears to be a copy of an item sent to one of the denominational papers and written in 1857 or '58:

"Geneva, Illinois, is now enjoying the ministrations of Rev. G. W. Woodward, formerly of Galena. He has preached only a few weeks to a congregation somewhat disheartened by a variety of depressing experiences, but there are already evidences of rising courage and an earnest and determined spirit of perseverence in sustaing public worship in Geneva. As in some other places, there are some noble women who love the church and its worship and who 'never say die.' Their former pastor was in the place a few days ago; the church door stood open and he stepped in. There were the ladies of the society—not a delegation of their servants—in their own proper persons and with their own fair hands with soap and brush cleaning the church they loved so well and in the neat appearance of which they always felt a noble, womanly pride. After standing for some moments unobserved, he interrupted the cheerful conversation and earnest work by inquiring if what he saw was an attempt at a practical illustration of 'washing the saints' feet.' They confessed that what they were doing partook of that nature, for they said that when they came to the pew occupied by the widow and orphans of the excellent and deeply loved Superintendent, Samuel N. Clark, no one was allowed the honor of washing it alone but all assisted as an expression of their profound respect and fervent love."

Next on my list comes the name of Eben Conant. I count it one of my great privileges to have known him for the last five years of his life though he died at the age of ninety-five. His peculiarities of appearance and manner did not make him an attractive person. Yet every one who mentioned "Grandfather Conant" did it with a tone of respect that would come in as a sort of mental reservation, even when speaking in an amused way of his

peculiarities.

It was generally thought that he was lacking in the higher development of the emotions, yet I am suspicious that it was not so much a lack of feeling as the want of the power of expression in the common way. I have heard him say that he could see no beauty in flowers, and the sound of a fiddle made him feel like running. Yet he was a man of such a profound conviction of the importance of duty, so great a reverence for God, so large a faith in man, so strong a confidence in the saving power of truth, that out of all these he stood forth the eminently religious man; and a man who was religious by the force of his intellectual convictions. His Unitarianism was the result of his own thinking. Theological and religious matters were of the highest interest to him. Out of his orthodox education had come such a habit of regarding the bible as the source of wisdom and guidance in those matters that he made it the great study of his life. It was a revelation indeed to hear him talk on such topics and note the natural way in which his thought found scriptural language. No Professor of biblical exegesis could show such depth of meaning, such variety of shade, such profusion of suggestions, as this homely old man, by the simple natural tone and emphasis he employed in quoting scripture.

It was the power of such convictions and the power of such a character that he brought to the upbuilding of this church.

We come next to the names of William and Sarah LeBaron. Theirs was another of the instances so fortunate for the society, in which marriage was not a failure. Their common interest in the liberal faith and the welfare of this society would have made a marriage that would have withstood the strongest test to which the relation might be put. Dr. LeBaron was a graduate of the Har-

vard Medical School which profession in that day was the one in which, in this country, a scientific education could best be obtained. His mind and temperament led him naturally to the pursuit of science and so "true to his own self" was he that he achieved an European reputation as an entomologist from a locality so obscure as this. It was this scientific mind with his tender heart, his quick and practical sympathy that made him a natural born Unitarian. He was too, the man on whom naturally fell the mantle of Samuel N. Clark as church factotum. Their terms of official services were nearly the same, Dr. LeBaron serving as trustee for eleven consecutive years. His signature was given to the church roll in 1845 and from that date to 1856 he was elected trustee and in 1862, 1866 and 1870 he was chosen to be secretary and treasurer.

He carried the church so deeply in his heart that he wrote up the record from memory when he first took charge of the books. The temptation to dwell upon the memory of this man is strong because I am writing from my personal knowledge.

This special mention of those who have given whole-hearted service to the church would be incomplete without the name of Robert Long, Sr. He was not among the earlier comers, but living among us for twenty-six years, his zeal and earnestness increased with his years. Though he died at the age of eighty-six the last years of his life were the best in church work. His clear head, loyal heart, and liberal hand have been greatly missed since his departure.

I must content myself, and probably disappoint some of you, by saying only that his character and attainments were of such worth as to add to the value of the religious faith to which he gave his adherence and to help consecrate the cause for which he worked.

It ought to add much to our appreciation of our faith

to know that it commanded the loyalty of such persons as Scotto and Samuel Clark, the enthusiasm of Harriet Patten and Caroline Wilson, the devotedness of Polly Clark and faithful service of William and Sarah LeBaron and Robert Long. I have not spoken of these men and women because their Unitarianism was a credit to them, but because they were a credit to Unitarianism.

Turning to more general considerations of the membership we find that five signers of the Declaration of 1842 are still living; Mrs. Samuel Clark, Mrs. A. H. Conant, Mrs. Wm. Conant (whose name was Mrs. Olivia Cleveland), Mrs. David Hanchett, (whose signature was Fayette Churchill) and Miss Susan Sophia Carr.* One hundred and forty-four names have been attached to the constitution in the fifty years, ninety-two of women and fifty-two of men.

It is interesting to note among these names six of one family, that of Thomas and Rachel Moulding; these with three of the Middletons and John B. Gulley and John Eddowes, were born in England, while Joseph and Ann Williams were from Wales.

I pause on these names for the interest there is for me in the fact that a colony of liberals from Old England should have come to associate with that first New England Colony in a common interest in liberalism.

So much I make room to say about the members by signature. But how shall I speak of the membership, which I suspect is much larger in numbers in every denomination, which might be called the membership by association or of the spirit. I refer to the large constituency which it is the lot of most churches to have. They are the people who attend the church from various motives.

*NOTE: Mrs. A. H. Conant, Mrs. Wm. Conant and Miss Carr attended the Semi-centennial celebration.

Among them are to be found some of the most ardent supporters of the faith and those who have been the most self-sacrificing in the matters of giving time and strength, and the most generous in their donations of money. I cannot pause even to name them.

Church Building.

What was the first place of meeting I have not been able to determine. Private houses, a store on the east side where the Gully residence now stands, then occupied by Peter Sears, a log schoolhouse near the river, and the old Court House on the site of the present Swedish Lutheran church, and the basement of the American House are all mentioned as being occupied at various times.

Each place had its peculiar discomforts. The store had so much whisky stored in its cellar as to make the "vile odor" of it a nuisance to the temperance people at least, and probably a source of inattention to those who were not temperate. The log schoolhouse was cold, and the scampering of the mice on the rafters, which were visible for lack of plastering, afforded the children relief from the weariness of services they may not have comprehended.

The history of the present building begins with a note in Mr. Conant's Journal under date of January 17, 1843. He says: "Received a letter from Miss P. H. Patten, a young lady who was in Geneva, and who became a member of our society at its formation but who has since returned to Roxbury, informing us that she was making preparations for a fair to aid our society. That she and her sister, (afterwards Mrs. Eastman) had visited Mr. Briggs, general secretary of the American Unitarian Association, to ascertain if anything could be obtained of the Association to aid us to build a church in Geneva, and

that he suggested that we make known our wants through the Christian Register. According to the suggestion of Mr. Briggs, on February 21 I wrote for the Register an account of our situation and wants, and an appeal for aid to build a church."

The letter referred to has been found in the files of the Christian Register under date of March 18, 1843, as well as other articles referring to the matter:

(From Christian Register of March 18, 1843.)

GENEVA, KANE COUNTY, ILLINOIS, February 21, 1843.

Messrs. Editors:—

As I have not the pecuniary means to visit the East to make an appeal to the religious sympathies of our brethren, I would be glad of a little space in the columns of the Register to make known to the liberal-minded and warm-hearted of our faith, in New England, the situation and wants of our infant society in Geneva. That there may be no misapprehension with regard to the importance of the place and its claims to consideration on this ground, I will remark that it is not a place of great magnitude nor in a very flourishing condition at this time. The mania for speculation in "Town-seats," a few years since, operated seriously against its growth and prosperity. The original proprietors demanded so high a price for lots that few purchases were made. But that mania has now subsided; property can now be purchased at a reasonable price, and we look for a change for the better. It is the seat of Justice for Kane county, has a good water-power and with regard to convenience for building and pleasant natural scenery it is as well situated as any village in the West. What we consider of most importance, however, is the country around it, and its central location with regard to other places. It is a fertile, healthy and already well populated region, six thriving villages within twelve miles, and it may be made the center of religious influence for a wide extent.

Our society, which is established on the broad grounds of common Christianity, was organized June 12, 1842. In the words of our Declaration, "We have associated ourselves together to promote practical godliness in the world, and aid each other in moral and religious improvement; not as agreeing in opinion, not as having attained universal truth in belief, or perfection in character, but as seekers after truth and goodness. Relying on God as our support and aid, Jesus Christ as our Teacher and Saviour, and the sacred Scriptures as our guide, and adopting the New Testament as our rule of faith and practice, recognizing as brethren the whole

human family, and as Christians all who manifest the spirit of Christ."

There is no other religious society in the place, and Episcopilians, Presbyterians and Baptists have united with our society and meet with us for worship. Though embracing such a variety in doctrinal opinions, our number is small; less than forty names are attached to our Declaration, and the number of efficient members is less than thirty. None of us are rich in the things of this world, but I trust some are rich in *faith and good purpose*.

Feeble as we are, we are ready to put forth what strength we have, and we believe that the principles we have adopted are *mighty*, and need only a fair opportunity to secure a glorious triumph.

We are at present suffering great inconvenience for want of a suitable place in which to hold meetings. The Court House, in which we have held meetings in summer, is out of repair and without a stove. During the present winter we have sometimes held our meetings on the Sabbath in a private house, and at other times in a small room erected for a grocery or store-room for ardent spirits, but now occupied during the week as a school-room. The room, though so dark as to be very inconvenient, is very open, the walls plastered only in part, loose boards overhead and wide cracks in the floor admitting the strong and abominable odor of alcohol from the cellar, and the cold air from every side without. In addition to other discomforts, the smoke has forced tears other than those of emotion from our eyes, and I have sometimes shivered with the cold to such a degree that distinct articulation was almost impossible. Notwithstanding these inconveniences some of our society come four or five miles and attend meeting regularly. But those who have not firm nerve and constitution dare not expose themselves, and remain at home, and those who are not interested in religion feel little disposition to endure the inconvenience.

Unless we can have a more suitable place in which to hold meetings, our society, if it does not utterly perish, will fail to accomplish the design of its formation. A congregation cannot be kept together under the circumstances in which we are placed.

If the inconveniences we suffer were conducive to the interests of religion, we would scorn to mention them. It is not for these inconveniences that we care, or of these that we would complain; but it is that they stand in the way of our doing that for which we would willingly endure much more. They weaken our efforts, frustrate our plans, and prevent the opportunity of exerting the little influence we may possess.

This is the evil we feel most deeply, and it is this which has compelled us to speak of our condition. If the remedy were in our own power, we should never have troubled others with an account of these circumstances or asked for aid. But it is not, and we be-

lieve fidelity to the cause of our Master requires that we make this statement.

We do not wish for a splendid church with a lofty spire, a cushioned pulpit and carpeted aisles, but we wish for a place where we may have space and light and comfort; where the sufferings of the outward shall not take our attention from the wants of the inward life. A place consecrated to religion and to the worship of God. We do not ask others to make sacrifice for us equal to what we are willing to make for ourselves. Those who do not see and experience, cannot be expected to have the knowledge and feelings of those who do. All we would ask is, that those who cherish the same principles and feel an interest in their maintenance and spread in the world, would contribute of "their abundance" to the supply of "our want."

We think that five hundred dollars, with what we can do ourselves, will enable us to erect such a building as we need, and for this sum we appeal to the religious sympathies of our brethren in New England.

We do not expect large contributions from individuals, but we hope many will be disposed in this case to test from experience the truth of the saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." "If there be a willing mind it will be accepted according to what a man hath and not according to what he hath not." The mountain is composed of grains, and we hope none will feel that the offering of "two mites" will be of no importance. Contributions will be received by Rev. Charles Briggs, General Secretary, A. U. A., and Mr. David Page, Boston. Individuals and societies from a distance may perhaps in some cases forward their contributions to Boston by clergymen who attend the May meetings.

Yours in the faith and love of Christ,

A. H. C.

(From the Christian Register of April 1, 1843.)

Extract from a letter from a gentleman in Geneva, Kane county, Illinois, to his friend in Boston:

I have heard to-day two most excellent discourses from the Rev. Mr. Conant. Knowing the great interest you feel in the Unitarian cause, I will endeavor to give you some idea of the trials of a Western preacher—as I am sure you will appreciate the energy and indefatigable zeal of this true disciple of our great Master. Mr. Conant is settled at Geneva, where he preaches every other Sunday, and devotes the alternate Sabbaths to the neighboring towns. Neither the most tempestuous weather nor intense cold prevents his being punctual to his engagements. He frequently has appointments for one day at places six, eight and ten miles apart, and although sometimes he finds only three or four hearers he is never disheartened, but renews his appointments with per-

fect faith that the great truths he preaches need only to be known to conquer existing prejudices. He meets sometimes with much opposition, but still he finds in many places persons who, although members of other churches, exclaim with surprise on hearing the Unitarian doctrine, "That is what I have always believed." One old man was so much pleased with Mr. Conant the other evening, that when the services were ended he came forward and presented him with a shilling. This is a fair sample of Mr. Conant's compensation. All he receives is from his people in Geneva, and he asks of them merely a support, which is generally given in the produce of the country, after the fashion of our Puritan ancestors. Fortunately Mr. Conant has some kind friends at the East. The duties of his profession appear with him a perfect labor of love. You who enjoy such privileges with regard to Unitarian preaching can scarcely realize its value to those who, having emigrated to the West in its wildest state, have been deprived for years of all preaching save that to be heard at a camp-meeting or from some traveling preacher. The Unitarians have no regular place of worship at Geneva. The building they now occupy is unfinished, and so cold that many of Mr. C.'s most zealous friends are deterred from attendance. You may hope that I am not amongst the missing, but I must plead guilty when the thermometer is much below zero. This morning's discourse, which was a clear statement of the Unitarian doctrine, and which would have done credit to any Eastern preacher, was delivered to an audience of twenty in a log building, with only one room about eighteen by twenty, and occupied by two families. This evening Mr. C. preached to quite a large audience at the town of Batavia, in the Episcopal church which building is very liberally opened to his use. The Unitarian doctrine, though slowly, is very perceptibly spreading in this vicinity, but the greatest fault of our good pastor is, that he blames himself for the want of zeal in others, not considering that one may plant and water, but cannot regulate the size of the tree or the rapidity of its growth.

(No signature.)

The same issue of the Register (April 1) contained also a letter from "a young man" of Batavia, in behalf of the church for Mr. Conant. But it contains nothing not included (substantially) in the previous quotations.

In the Register for May 13, 1843, is the following:

UNITARIAN SOCIETY AT GENEVA.

Our readers will be pleased to hear that the Rev. Mr. Conant, who has labored long and faithfully in Geneva and its neighbor-

hood in the cause of Christian truth and holiness, is about to experience a very gratifying reward of his labors in the erection of a commodious place of worship.

On the first of the month the ladies of Roxbury held a fair, at the Hall of the Norfolk House, with the express purpose of aiding in the erection of the Geneva church. There was evidence of a prevalent desire to aid in the promotion of a purpose so benevolent and praiseworthy. A large company assembled and gave substantial testimony of their interest in the cause. The company assembled was addressed by Rev. Messrs. Putnam and Clarke, and by Hon. J. Chapman, J. C. Park, Esq., and Mr. Huidekoper, who urged the importance of seconding and encouraging the efforts of our Western brethren for the erection of a suitable place of worship.

In the Register of August 19 are printed the "Resolutions" of the Geneva Society, acknowledging the receipt of \$800.00, and signed by A. H. Conant, S. N. Clark, and S. K. Whiting.

May 20, 1843, Scott Clark, Leonard J. Carr, Amasa White, Chas. Patten and Samuel K. Whiting were appointed a building committee; C. B. Dodson and Peter Sears, committee to solicit contributions from Geneva and vicinity. There is no record of the laying of the corner stone, but I have often heard Mrs. Harriet Patten refer to the people who attended the ceremony and incidents connected with it. Mrs. Augustus Conant informs us that there is deposited in the stone a sealed box containing church papers to date, a fact which should be borne in mind if this building is ever removed. There are some faint recollections of how the church was built by contributed labor as well as money; the Carr brothers leaving their farm work to haul stone and Mr. Conant working with his hands as well as with his head and heart. The communion table he made is still preserved in a private house.

Under date of April 9, 1854, is a record covering the time from January, 1843, to July, 1845, which sums up the account for the building which cost \$954. The

\$154 over the \$800 sent from Boston being credited to subscriptions; the amount raised by Messrs. Dodson and Sears, it is to be inferred. Under date of December 30, 1843, it is recorded that Wednesday, January 24, 1844, was fixed upon as the day for dedicating the church. It does not appear whether it was occupied then for the first time.

It is gratifying to note that at this meeting it was voted "that the Rev. Mr. Alanson (Episcopal Clergyman) may occupy the church every alternate Sunday in the absence of the pastor." The dedication took place as arranged. According to the record the Revs. Walworth, Nicholsen and Harrington, the last of Chicago, and Mr. Arthur B. Fuller of Belvidere took part in the exercises. The sermon was preached by Mr. Conant from the text "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men." A singularly appropriate text, when we remember the discomforts of previous meeting places, and the earnest devotedness of some of the people which must have made them feel that "Glory to God!" was the truest expression of their feelings of triumph and joy in their own consecrated house of worship. The vote before its dedication to offer the use of the house to another denomination gave ample proof that it was indeed good will toward men that should be preached within its walls in deeds as well as words. Original hymns were contributed for the occasion by Isaac McLellan (a minor poet of the day) and Eben Conant, father of the pastor.

No record regarding the building occurs for seven years, when there is a call for an estimate for painting and other repairs. In October, 1851, is the first entry of funds furnished by the ladies for the above purpose.

In May, 1855 a meeting is called to consider the propriety of enlarging the church. It is noted that "if

the amount of \$600 is subscribed we shall proceed to the enlargement of the church at once." Luther Dearborn, Chas. Patten, Wm. LeBaron and C. B. Wells are committee on soliciting subscriptions. In one week the committee reported \$565 raised with enough in prospect to make the \$600. Wm. LeBaron, Jarvis Danford, Jos. Williams, and Eben Conant comprised the building committee. In 1856 the account for building purposes is recorded as \$644.22.

After a break of eighteen years a meeting was called January 17, 1874, at which a committee (S. W. Curtis, W. W. Ormsbee and W. O. Clark) is appointed to estimate on repairs to "make the church comfortable." On the 25th at another meeting the committee is not ready to report and Miss Rebecca Eddowes and Miss Esther M. Orton are added to the committee; being the second entry of the appointment of women on church business. On the 26th the work was begun which resulted in replastering as well as furring the walls which had before been plastered on the stone; wainscoting, new floor, new entrance, new book cases, new carpet, new platform and new chandeliers were put in and the Sunday School met on April 19. The cost was \$1054.02, to which the Unity church of Chicago gave \$100 and Mrs. Eben Conent \$100. A two days meeting was held April 21 and 22 to celebrate the reopening at which the Revs. Balch of Elgin, Gorton of Aurora, Hunting of Davenport, Iowa, G. W. Patten, G. W. Cooke and Hewitt of Oak Park and Stebbins of Ithaca, N. Y., were present. In August, 1879, a meeting was called to consider the matter of reseating the church which resulted in securing \$459 for that purpose. October 5, 1879, a vote of thanks is recorded to Walter D. and Maria C. (LeBaron) Turner for the gift of windows. In 1891 the platform was altered, the church recarpeted

and papered, and a chimney added to the west end, at a cost of \$255.

Pastorates.

Up to the present time seven ministers have been regularly employed as pastors, their combined time of service amounting to thirty-six years. Of these Mr. Conant occupied sixteen, Mr. Woodward three and one-third, your historian four, Mr. Herbert six, Mr. West three and one-half, Mr. Byrnes three. One term of regular lay service for six months and another of a year have been maintained. These with the two periods of six months each of regular supply by Mr. Hibbard of the Universalist church of Aurora, with the other occasional supplies make it safe to say that services have been kept up forty years of the fifty. There are two breaks in the record, one of six years from 1856 to 1862, and one of two years from 1880 to 1882, in which no record is kept; though in 1862 Dr. LeBaron sums up the pulpit record for the time.

The principal events of Mr. Conant's time are so fully treated in the paper of Miss LeBaron that but little is left to mention here. I note that fifty-eight names were signed during his pastorate.

Of Mr. Woodward's pastorate the records show that he came to Geneva in connection with other business. After Mr. Conant removed to Rockford in July, 1857, Mr. Woodward volunteered to supply the pulpit during the autumn and a part of the winter. In March, 1858 he was invited to take the office of pastor, which he retained till January 1, 1862. As there are no records made during this time, I have tried to get some idea of the nature of the work done in the church, and find that Mr. Woodward's work seems to have been largely in a social way

among the younger people.

The society held lay services till June, 1862, when they listened to Rev. A. H. Hibbard of the Universalist church of Aurora and made an engagement with him to supply the pulpit on alternate Sundays. This engagement could only be fulfilled during the summer, as the distance and the state of the roads prevented its being carried on in winter.

During the winter of 1862 and 1863 the pulpit was supplied by Rev. J. B. C. Beaubien, a Presbyterian clergyman who had been born in the Catholic church.

Soon after Scott Clark's family swarmed from the West church of Boston to found this tabernacle in northeastern Illinois, another family, whose connection had been with the First Unitarian church of Philadelphia, was settling over in the northwestern corner of the state at Galena. On one of his missionary trips Mr. Conant went as far as Galena and made the acquaintance of this family. He held a service in their parlor to which were summoned all such as were supposed or known to be interested in such preaching. The youngest member of the family stood at his mother's knee through the service, and has to-day a recollection of the little, ruddy faced man, standing behind a light stand with a bible and two tallow candles, in brass candle sticks, upon it, and wondering what it all meant. It was through the endeavors of this family to start a Unitarian church in Galena, that Mr. Woodward was induced to come to Illinois. It was a hard struggle which ended in failure to accomplish that object. It was largely through the good offices of Mr. Woodward's family, though they were not residing here at the time, that the boy who stood at his mother's knee through that missionary service, was installed as the successor of Mr. Conant and Mr. Woodward in 1865. His life since

that time has been so intimately connected with the society that the office of historian on this occasion falls naturally to him.

I found the church blooming in a new coat of paint on the inside, the ground newly enclosed on the outside and a warm welcome awaiting me. In some ways, September, 1865 was an interesting time to take up church work. The date amply indicates the political situation, while in denominational circles the smoke of the great battle between radical and conservative Unitarians had hardly cleared away. My ordination was the first in the history of the society. Robert Collyer and C. A. Staples with D. M. Reed a Universalist from Rockford, took all the parts between them, Mr. Staples preaching the sermon, Mr. Collyer giving the ordaining prayer and right hand, Mr. Reed the charge to the candidate. The engagement was renewed for three years successively; then there was a year's absence and another year's engagement.

As the summing up of my work, I think I may say that the society was guided into the ranks of the progressive Unitarianism, and that the Sunday School library was made an efficient arm of the services. My last sermon as pastor was given in November, 1870.

In June, 1874, Mr. Herbert first came among us. He came to the newly renovated church and by his inspiring pulpit ministrations held the best audience since Mr. Conant's time and commanded a larger salary than was paid before or since his day. He had a great hold on the floating element with the peculiarities of his manner, the quaintness of his style, his deep religious fervor, and the practical value of his thought. The social life of the society received an impetus from the increase in numbers which it has not maintained since his day. In 1879 began one of those periodic times that have come too often,

when death and removals from town made a diminution in our ranks, which was greater than the accessions, and in 1880 it was found that the society must give Mr. Herbert up to a louder call and a wider field at Denver. His six years stay and growing reputation brought us attendants from Batavia and St. Charles and the country around which his successors have not been able to retain.

After an interval of three years and seven months from the time of Mr. Herbert's departure, Mr. West came to us full of life and energy, in February, 1884. The depression which had followed Mr. Herbert's going, had given place to a conviction that it was necessary to hold on to what we had if we were to keep from complete disintegration, and a period of church life began which was a turning over of a new leaf. We made a more systematic effort to live up to our ethical standards and denominational convictions. Under the stimulus of Mr. West's preaching we were unanimous in our desire to revise the declaration and constitution which resulted in the present form of those documents. The old style of annual meetings, a fifteen or thirty minutes' session after the morning session, at which officers were elected, was changed for the parish reunion with an early tea and a business meeting, where we not only elected officers and attended to the finances, but appointed committees for ethical work and heard reports from such as well as from the pastor, Sunday School Superintendent, chairmen of committees, etc. We had also the first of the study classes under the minister's leadership. Altogether, though the work done at the time seemed small as compared with that done by more flourishing churches, it had a respectable result in proportion that was a satisfaction to recall in the days when less was accomplished. Forty names were added to the church roll during Mr. West's administra-

tion. It is but just, however, to state that more than half were names that ought to have been subscribed years before. Another marked feature of Mr. West's ministry was the interest he awakened in our neighboring village of La Fox. For two seasons of good roads and weather he held afternoon service there, which resulted in developing an interest that was shown in the generous, financial aid they gave to his support for two years. His letter of resignation, dated June 19, 1887, was accepted on the 26th of that month.

The most remarkable item in connection with the engagement of Mr. Byrnes is, that, instead of waiting three years, more or less, the society engaged him in three months after Mr. West left. He began his work in October, 1887, and finished it in June, 1890. He was ordained in February, 1888, being the second occasion of that kind in the history of the society. The participants were Revs. Geo. Batchelor, Chester Covell, J. Ll. Jones, James Vila Blake and J. R. Effinger. The methods adopted under Mr. West were kept up. The circumstances of the society as to attendance and finances remained very much the same, so that I find nothing special to note of these three ministerial years.

In January, 1892, the present incumbent came to us, and the results of his work must be summed up by your centennial historian, or better still, at the seventy-fifth anniversary.

By The Way.

It is to be noted that the peculiarity in our history as compared with that of the Unitarian churches of similar age is, that those at Chicago, Quincy, St. Louis, Cincinnati and Louisville struck what proved to be metropolitan points. Whether the pioneers ever expected Geneva to

equal them in its development we cannot tell, but certainly they must have had hope of a greater growth than that which amounts to a place of less than two thousand souls more than fifty years after its founding.

When we look for the results of early missionary work in the other small places in this state, and adjoining ones, we find now mostly "burnt over" spots. Dixon, Como, Sterling, Lockport, Elgin, Joliet, Belvidere, Galena, Hillsboro and Tremont are places in Illinois where attempts were made to start Unitarian churches. With the exception of Tremont there is nothing left I think in any of those organizations to-day. Elgin, Joliet and Dixon have Universalist churches to represent the liberal element. In all of them, unless it were Como and Tremont, Unitarians had to contend with other denominations that were already organized. Our peculiarity is, that we were the first on the ground and it is largely owing to that fact I think, that we are in existence to-day.

Another circumstance which I think has helped to keep us alive is the smallness of our population. We were undoubtedly the leading church for the first ten or fifteen years of the town's existence, and through the exceptional qualities of the founders, achieved and kept a respect for and sympathy with the society, which might have been lost in a larger influx of orthodox people. To-day we are so much of an influence in the thought of the community that it is a mitigated, if not a progressive, Orthodoxy that flourishes best in our atmosphere.

In studying the society's record for materials for this paper, one is disappointed to find that the earlier secretaries found so little worth recording beside the election of officers and the financial standing at the end of each year. The absence of those items that would show the history of the society's work in various ways is particularly mark-

ed in the intervals between the pastorates. Yet there were no more active periods on the part of the earnest members, than these times.

In the interim of 1862 to 1865 a large part of the society's life was given to work for the Sanitary Commission. During that of 1870 to 1874 the Sunday School was kept up in such an active and earnest way as to win the sympathy and respect of all concerned, the special services of Christmas and Flower Sunday being of the greatest success. It was in the last year of this period that Miss Esther M. Orton and Miss Rebecca Eddowes determined that the building should be renovated, and by their efforts in various ways, by January, 1874, had raised \$150 for that purpose. There is record of a meeting held that month to appoint a committee to make estimates as to what amount was necessary to make the church comfortable. Later, at a meeting called to hear the report of the committee, Miss Eddowes and Miss Orton were added to the committee. It strikes your historian that the unwritten history of the matter would justify me in saying that the committee were added to the above mentioned ladies, as by their further efforts \$1,054 was raised and the repairs completed by the middle of the April following. The story of the raising of the funds ought to be told by some one having the talents of Edward Everett Hale for showing how improbable things happen in a probable way. The account of the way in which the enthusiasm spread from one to another until Mrs. Polly Conant (widow of Eben Conant) gave \$100 and the Unity church of Chicago \$100 is well worth hearing. The names of Thomas J. Clark and S. W. Curtis, who were of our membership of the spirit, should be mentioned as those of the two men who stood most gallantly by the ladies.

So whatever have been the intervals of time between pastorates this has never been a dead church. It cannot indeed be said to have even had periods of suspended animation. The fire on the church hearth may have been low at times, but there has always been some friendly hand to draw the coals together and keep the life in them till the right time came to let the air in upon them. When a little more fuel has been needed to keep the flame alive, it has been mostly woman's hand that has brought it. When the flame has burned merrily and the society has basked in the glow of prosperity, it has been mostly woman's breath that has fanned the flame to its greater life.

The record does not do full justice to the part woman has borne in keeping up the society, but it is a satisfaction to note, the first name of a woman who was officially appointed in the society is that of Mrs. Samuel Clark. She was placed upon an advisory committee which was meant to be a sort of pastor's cabinet. The next official mention is of the appointment of Miss Eddowes and Miss Orton on the committee for repairing in 1874. In 1890 Mrs. Julia C. Blackman presided at the annual meeting and Mrs. Julia Plato Harvey was elected chairman of trustees, and in 1892 Miss E. H. Long was chosen treasurer. Other women have been appointed on different committees for the church work since the adoption of ethical work in 1885; these are the first officers.

It was under Mrs. Harvey's efficient chairmanship that the most successful term of lay service, covering eight months, was sustained, and in connection with Mrs. A. O. Hoyt and Mrs. H. Medora Long, that the latest renovation of our church interior was so tastefully carried out.

It is further to be noted that this has always been a

harmonious church. The article of our declaration which says that we have associated ourselves together, not as agreeing in opinion, has been well lived up to, as there have been differences of opinion among us and serious ones too; but there has never been a church quarrel about them. We have had no factions to divide us. Although Mr. Conant, after sixteen years of devotion to this church and the cause, left it mainly on account of difference of opinion on political subjects, yet I have never heard that there was anything that might be called a personal bitterness called out by it. I suspect that his was a nature as incapable of exciting such a feeling as of retaining it. I know, that when some years later six or seven families withdrew from my ministration for similar reasons, that there was nothing of the kind between them and myself. It was an honest difference of opinion, and their withdrawing until such time as another should fill my place, was a wise and wholesome thing to do. Since that time I have found that there was never a break in the mutual personal regard we had for each other, and we have stood shoulder to shoulder, working for the cause and the church with never a thought of the past to disturb our harmony. I trust that this reference to bygones is not ungracious, but I could not find a better illustration of the fine unity of the spirit that underlies the agreement to disagree.

We have always been an honest church. It is a matter of pride and satisfaction that we can say that the church has never been in debt. I have already mentioned that it is somewhat of an aggravation that the earlier records should be so largely confined to financial matters, but this very explanation of all things else, seems to show how dear the honesty of the society was in those days; it is to be inferred that they considered keeping out of debt

the chief end of the society. There is more than one mention of a deficiency, and the appointment of committees to raise funds, but there is no record of a deficiency that was not met, and no appointment of committees to raise funds for debts which had been contracted beyond the society's ability to pay.

Anniversary Hymn.

WRITTEN FOR THE OCCASION BY JAMES H. WEST, PASTOR FROM
1884 TO 1887.

O TEMPLE sacred to the Past,
And sacred to the Present too!
Thy walls, which Fifty Years outlast,
To-day we consecrate anew:
Anew to God, anew to Man,
To Love, to Helpfulness, to Truth;
While more in each of these we scan
Than those who knew thee in thy youth.

Oh, blest that as the centuries fly
Man's soul doth deeper, higher roam!
Yet feels the more that earth and sky
Are but a vaster temple-home:
Temple that needs no sun to thrill,
So grand its inner, fadeless Light;
The Godlike in the human still
Redeeming it from evil plight.

Honor be thine, O walls grown gray,
That Freedom here was ever given
To prophet-souls to point the way
To higher God and higher heaven.
With Freedom still thy Word be twined,
O reverend aisles, to us so dear!
And other Fifty Years still find
The voice of Progress echoing here.

Above the clamors of our day,
Which fain would drown the still small voice,
We hear a mightier Presence say,
Rejoice, O sons of men! Rejoice!
Be open still to prophets' cry;
Go on to keener insight yet!
Much still remains of Deep and High
Ere suns and stars of God are set.

Character Sketch.

OF THE FIRST PASTOR, REV. A. H. CONANT, BY MISS FRANCES
LE BARON OF ELGIN, ILL.

I accepted this position on the program with much reluctance, for I knew that there were others who could write this memorial in a more scholarly way; but when I considered that it would give me an opportunity to express my deep love for the man and my intense gratitude for the blessed privilege it was to sit under his ministrations, I felt I had no right to refuse. Often in my missionary work, I have received letters from those of our own faith who have spent their childhood surrounded by strict Calvinists, who had to stay away from church and Sunday School, or go where they were labored over as surely among the lost, and were forced to listen to doctrines from which their souls revolted. These experiences have made me realize my early privileges, and have given me an almost painfully intense feeling of gratitude, to Mr. Conant and the nucleus who organized this church and gave me the blessing, accorded to so few in this western world, of growing up in an atmosphere of freedom, where I need not believe a thing because I was told to do so and on pain of everlasting torment if I could not believe.

In a letter to Rev. James Freeman Clarke under date



Augustus H. Conant.

of May 30, 1842, while organizing this society, Mr. Conant says: "It is a day of small things, but even these small things are full of promise. May we not hope they are the germs of a greatness that shall yet be commensurate with the religious wants of a great people?" Though this greatness, as far as Geneva is concerned, is not visible in brick and stone, nor in silver and gold, it is visible in the hundreds, perhaps thousands of lives that have gone out from this town, lightened from the dark cloud of Calvinistic theology by the reasonable religion preached in this little church, by the high, spiritual teachings, emphasized as they were by the noble and beautiful lives of its members, which have permeated every family in the town. My subject is properly Mr. Conant, the man and the minister, and I leave the consideration of his missionary labors more especially to Rev. Lorenzo Kelsey, his brother-in-law, and co-laborer; and his army life to Col. J. C. Long, who was with him.

Mr. Conant was rather below medium height, but in his pulpit one lost that impression from the earnestness and intensity of his manner and, as the high and noble thoughts came pouring forth in terse, vigorous, pointed sentences, the whole man seemed to rise to the occasion and his audience gave no thought to his stature. No matter if the first impression was unfavorable, he soon swept that away by his zeal, his genuineness, his self-forgetfulness. One story is told of him when preaching in Boston. He was for a moment almost overwhelmed by the imposing church and the large audience, all of them strangers, but, recovering himself he said: "You have probably noticed my embarrassment, but you will please remember that I am not used to so large a church and so many people. I am in the habit of preaching to a few people in log school houses and backwoods parlors." The people

all smiled and, as he felt the sympathy of his audience, his embarrassment disappeared.

Another picture we have of him among the Eastern friends comes from Mrs. Eastman, sister of Charles and George Patten and Mrs. Samuel Clark. In a letter written to Mrs. Cleveland, now Mrs. Wm. Conant, under date of Roxbury, June 7, 1846, she says: ‘I wish you could have been here to see what a general favorite Mr. Conant is in this region; and how admirably he appears, even in our highest places; for instance, at Chauncey Place giving the Thursday lecture, that most venerable institution where the clergy from Boston and neighboring towns assemble every week to hear each other preach. The construction of the church is peculiar, and the light in which the preacher stands very favorable and Mr. Conant looked large as life and like one inspired. He was entirely free from embarrassment and positively graceful in his oratory. His subject was, ‘The Condition and Wants of the West.’ You would all have been proud of such an advocate. I think he must be exalted a little in self esteem from his remarkably favorable reception here and that will do *him* no harm. I must tell you the remark of an eccentric but excellent lady, when Mr. Conant preached for Mr. Putnam. After service she came to me and said, ‘Well, if this is a specimen of your western pets, I should like to see more of them.’ Mr. Putnam was much pleased with him which *we* think no small praise.’’

When, at the age of thirty-one years, he began his ministrations in Geneva he was so boyish in his appearance that Mr. Scott Clark thought him some young boy of the neighborhood and had grave doubts as to his ministerial ability, but when he heard him preach his doubts vanished and he said sometime later, when arranging for his salary: “We are glad to have you among us and, though

we cannot give you much money, we will try to give you plenty of bread and butter." One is reminded of this remark when, in looking over his journal of amounts received, we find "cash" occasionally, but more often such entries as these: "Rented Squire Miller's house for \$50 a year and call his subscription to the church paid; bought of Mr. B., on account, two bushels buckwheat at 75 cents; of Mr. C., 13 pounds butter at 8 cents, \$1.04;" and so on. It was at this time that he said to his wife, "I am willing to make a ten years' trial of preaching and if I fail, I will seek some other employment," but she never heard him express any desire to give it up.

He was very methodical in all he did and his classmates at Cambridge remember the amount of work he accomplished by utilizing every moment. It seems almost incredible the amount of practical work he did in Geneva in addition to his pulpit and pastoral duties. He was a natural mechanic and helped with his own hands on the carpenter work of this building. He made furniture at odd moments, not only for his own family but as gifts for his parishioners.

It was never necessary for *him* to go to Europe, or to go out camping for his vacation. He rested from his mental labors by contact with Mother Earth, working on his farm and in his garden day by day. That he could combine pleasure and rest in this way was most fortunate, as it enabled him to aid very materially in keeping the wolf from the door by supplementing with the fruits of his garden the meagre income of \$200 or \$300, which was all the people could raise during most of his pastorate. He also instructed his sons in the pleasures and profits of rural labor, and one interesting story is told of a bit of family discipline in this connection. One warm day, when he and his two sons were working in the garden, one of them complained

of his hard lot in having to work, when his companions were off playing. Mr. Conant sympathized with him and sent him into the house for a chair and an umbrella. All the rest of the afternoon he had to sit in the chair with the umbrella over his head, while his father and brother went on with their work. It seemed to him that there never was such a long afternoon and that his father never had so many callers, who had to come to the garden to see him, and we venture to say he never complained again of having to work too hard.

That he was a dear lover of children their strong love for him proves, and many of his sermons were to, or about them, showing his thorough sympathy with them. He says: "In the deep interest we take in the accomplishment of our own schemes, in the magnitude of importance which they assume to our minds, we are in great danger of overlooking the interests of others and especially of little children. We are in danger of esteeming their affairs of little consequence, of doing them injustice by disregarding the importance of their employments and amusements, by a want of sympathy with their plans and purposes, their desires and efforts, their hopes and fears. We are in danger of undervaluing the importance of those circumstances and influences which form the opinions, habits and character of the infancy of manhood, of neglecting the intellectual and moral education of children. Against this danger we have need to be on our guard. *

* * * We ought to remember that they have like capacities and powers and affections to our own. That in their little world they have their trials and conflicts and temptations, their hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, as much as those who live in the great world above them. That they are experiencing, in the main, the same discipline and learning the same lessons with those who are

older and, in fact, are but a few steps behind us in the endless path of knowledge and improvement. We laugh at their toys and despise their ignorance and simplicity, and the vanity of their pursuits, and think not that, in the eye of a more perfect Wisdom, our own ignorance and folly are as strikingly apparent." This was written at a time when children were kept out of sight, were severely, often cruelly disciplined and before the dawn of the present period of autocratic children and obedient, or disobedient parents.

His sympathy with children was only a part of the large-hearted sympathy for the whole human race, and the animal kingdom as well, that was one of the most marked characteristics of his nature. It was this, combined with his entire forgetfulness of self, that drew people so strongly to him, that made every one respond when he appealed for help in his missionary work, and that called about him little groups of parishioners in a dozen or more towns in Northern Illinois and Southern Wisconsin. If only more such devoted spirits could have been found to foster the germs that he brought to life the liberal cause would have flourished a main, but such spirits are rare, and the seed he planted in some places lacked nourishment.

Mr. Conant was generous to a fault, and many are the stories told of him to illustrate this characteristic. When he came to Geneva with his wife and two sons, he could find no abiding place except two rooms in Mrs. Herrington's house, that stood by the spring near which Mrs. Thad. Herrington's house now stands. For these he paid \$2 a month. In a day or two he found a man who, with his wife and child, could not afford to pay any rent, and he gave them the use of one of the rooms.

A poor cobbler came to Geneva after they had set-

tled in their own place, and Mr. Conant built him a house with his own hands, found him work and looked after and helped him as long as he lived. One evening he came home late to tea, looking flushed and heated, and explained that he had been splitting some tough knots of wood for a poor widow who needed the fuel. When cloth was sent him for a suit of clothes, he took half for a coat and sent the other half to a neighboring minister who needed help. Rev. Rush R. Shippen recalls that, when a student at Cambridge, a friend gave him some handsome cloth for a coat which he took to a tailor and exchanged for more yards of an inferior quality, that he might give a coat to a fellow student who was in need. Also, that during this time his family were staying with relatives in Vermont and a friend gave him money to go and visit them. He saved the money for his college expenses and walked from Boston to Northern Vermont. In the army, when the officers were to have a banquet, he declined to take part but, with the money he would have contributed to the banquet, he bought delicacies for the hospital. Many more such stories could be told as his life was full of just such incidents.

His position upon political subjects was always on the highest platform. He had no patience with the spirit that kept so important a class of interests entirely outside of, and separate from all religious considerations. In 1858 Fourth of July fell on Sunday and he took that occasion to make a Fourth of July oration for his sermon.

He says: "Men sometimes wish to make an entire separation between things of religion and things of ordinary life. Especially would they keep politics and religion apart from each other; but this birthday of our nation, this day of glory, gratitude and joy, in the natural order of things and of God's great Providence takes its turn of

Sundays in the week, just as though one of these days belonged to Him as much as the others, and just as though He felt no impropriety in bringing religion and polities face to face. True religion, I am certain, has no occasion for a feeling of diffidence in the presence of the genius of American Freedom, and our American Goddess of Liberty ought not to blush in the presence of the religion of Christ. For American Liberty is the daughter of Christianity. It was born of the sentiment of our text, 'All ye are brethren.' It is the offspring of the doctrine of Divine paternity and human brotherhood. The despotsisms of the old world rest upon assumptions of special Divine rights and the possession of power. But our national union is an attempt to found and govern a state on Christ's idea of brotherhood, and Christ's doctrine of equal rights of humanity and of equal justice to all men. It disclaims the assumption of lordship and a natural right of authority of one man over another. It makes every man free of all but God. It is an endeavor to realize Christ's idea and carry out Christ's principles in political action and natural life. Such being the character of our national union, the great idea and object of our government, we have no occasion to suspect the existence of any incongruity between politics and religion. We have therefore, no reason to feel that it is out of place for the Fourth of July, our national birthday, to come on Sunday. We have no reason to feel that a consideration of national and political interests is out of season, in connection with our holiest religious sentiments and services."

He then goes on to show that, as Jesus' teachings were so far in advance of his times that now, nearly two thousand years later, we are only beginning to comprehend and to live up to them, so the Declaration of Independence, that all men are created free and equal,

was so far above the heads of the people at that time that, when the constitution came to be made, the framers found it impossible to make *it* as high in its character as the declaration, published to the world eleven years before.

* * * The people loved freedom for themselves. They scorned to bear even a light yoke of political servitude but, under the constitution, based upon the Declaration of Independence, slavery was permitted an existence and a silent recognition. He then proceeds to deal sledge-hammer blows on the inertness that still allows slavery to exist, with a bravery that we of to-day can hardly appreciate, and exclaims:

"If we have not christian principle enough to act in accordance with our great ideas of justice and the rights of man, if we have not conscience enough to make us defend the oppressed and down trodden but, for the sake of union and our own peace, we would be willing to let the African race remain in everlasting bondage, this institution of slavery *will by no means fail to reach where we shall feel it, to take hold of us where we are alive and to compel us, for our own personal freedom and safety and self interests to rise up against it and reassert the doctrines of the Declaration of Independence.*"

This and other sentences in this discourse, written four years before Lincoln was elected, show a prophetic spirit possessed by few even of his co-laborers in the pulpit. We now point to him with pride as one Unitarian minister, who stood bravely by his colors, the red, white and blue, and by the eternal principles of right. It is almost impossible, even for those of us who lived through it, to realize the courage, the absolute fearlessness of this and other equally brave sentences in this and similar sermons. He felt that every sin was his special opponent, that the more near it came to his flock, the

more he must expose its dangerous proximity, even though he knew that in all probability it would sever his connection with these dear friends.

And here I must say, for the credit of the little band to whom Mr. Conant in a special manner belonged, that some were in sympathy with him fully, and the rest to the extent of giving him the fullest freedom to speak his boldest and strongest thought; but new families had come in, who had not had the privilege of living with this hardy pioneer band and absorbing their independence and of becoming imbued with their spirit and with that of their pastor. And Mr. Conant could not work against even a small number of disaffected ones, when he was used to entire confidence and sympathy. I am impelled to make this explanation lest it seem that Mr. Conant's personality was weak and valueless, instead of being strong and vigorous. Without doubt, the very ones who were most active in their disaffection would have taken an entirely different course had they had the good fortune to have listened to our blessed pastor a few years, instead of a few months.

But he was even more prophetic upon other subjects. Over forty years ago he took time to learn stenography and used it some in his sermons and he was even then strongly interested in spelling reform. While Fröbel was yet struggling with an adverse public opinion in Europe this Unitarian minister, far off on the Illinois prairies, had solved and was urging his principles. Among the many progressive ideas he expressed on this subject, I can take time for but one.

He says: "Childhood and youth are the most vital, susceptible and appreciative periods of human life. * * * More attention should be given to providing occupation for all the receptive faculties and active energies

of children. Give the little child the opportunity and means and he will be a perpetual student and experimenter in the examination of the elements, facts and forces of nature. Give him tools and materials and he at once takes lessons in mechanics, destructive perhaps at first, more destructive than constructive, but always instructive and therefore of interest and worth. When the season and weather permit put him in the garden, and he will at once commence observations and experiments in geology, geography, entomology, botany, and a dozen other sciences."

This extract might also be used to show that he was looking forward to manual training as a branch of education.

I wish I could give you an idea of one of his sermons on Temperance, but I have only time for a few disconnected sentences. A quarter of a century before anyone else suggested it, he urged the idea of checking intemperance by influencing the saloon keeper and the owners of buildings used for saloons. He took for his text, "Alas for the man through whom the offence cometh," and says:

"Men who know the effects of the liquor traffic and the terrible results of the use of intoxicating beverages, and who acknowledge that it is wrong, and who confess that their only motive and excuse is the gainfulness of the traffic, live among us and, disregarding the welfare of their fellow men and the warnings of Christianity and the monitions of their own consciences, continue the ruinous work. And there are others, too, who are little less guilty than they, the landlord who rents tenements for such use is one 'through whom the offense cometh.' * * * The reasoning that men who want it will have it and they themselves may as well reap the advan-

tages as for others to do so will not excuse them from guilt. If no liquor were to be had, none could be drank. If no one would allow the use of a building for the sale of it, no one would sell it, and intemperance would not exist. Through those who furnish the beverage the offense cometh and the guilt of its crimes and woes rests upon them. * * * What a sacrifice of peace, purity and integrity and all real worth and enduring for that which will not purchase for the guilty soul a single hour of relief from the agonies of self-condemnation and remorse. * * * Will you say of this as of the gain ! 'Some one will bring this guilt and torment upon his soul if I do not, and I may as well bear it as another?' * * * If you will continue to be a curse instead of a blessing to the friendly community in which you live, what can you expect in case of your death but that we shall rejoice that a less evil has delivered us from a greater ?'

I very much want to give you more and fuller extracts to show you his power as a sermonizer, but time forbids. He indulged in no flowers of rhetoric but, with simple directness, went straight to the heart of his subject and his words carried conviction. He felt deeply, expressed himself strongly and clearly and was absolutely fearless and independent in his determination to speak the truth as it appeared to him, and thoroughly practical, always urging his people to live up to their highest ideals. One can hardly believe in looking over his manuscripts that they were written so long ago, and in a country where books were almost inaccessible. I well remember how, when any one of the little band obtained a book, no matter upon what subject, it was considered the property of all who wished to read it and that it was usually returned to the owner in nearly as good a condition as when it started on its travels. And yet here on the prairie was this bright

intellect, fully abreast of, and even in advance of his times, surrounded by a coterie of congenial spirits, all studying together the problems of the day and of the future.

Mr. Conant was a noted man in his day. During his visits east he met many prominent people, who never forgot the quaint figure from which spoke the great soul. Most of the noted people who came west to lecture or to study the country in the early days visited him. While in Geneva he numbered among his guests Margaret Fuller, Horace Greeley, Lant. Carpenter, of England, Mrs. Caroline Dahl, Mrs. Rebecca Clark and Miss Sarah, the artist, the mother and sister of Rev. James Freeman Clarke, Miss Cummins, the authoress, Henry Giles, Isaac McClellan, the poet, Fred Douglass, Revs. Robert Collyer, Rush R. Shippen, C. A. Staples, Geo. W. Hosmer and Dr. Noyes. In Rockford among his guests were Ralph Waldo Emerson, Prof. Yeomans, Lucy Stone Blackwell, Tom Corwin, of Ohio, Bayard Taylor and Revs. John Pierpont, Starr King and others.

I cannot close this paper more appropriately than by reading this letter from Rev. C. A. Staples, of Lexington, Mass., written for this occasion. It is a critical summing up of this noble character by one who knew him and loved him well.

"In the summer of 1853, while a student in Meadville Theological School, I wrote to Mr. Conant asking him if he could find some missionary work for me in his vicinity during the approaching summer vacation. He replied cordially, inviting me to visit him and promising to find occupation for me in preaching as long as I chose to remain. Accordingly I started for Chicago as soon as the school closed and in due time reached Geneva, where I was heartily welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Conant. I well

remember his pleasant home, his bright and cheery face, his simple, cordial manner and his earnest devotion to his duties as preacher and pastor. He was then preaching to his own people morning and evening on Sunday, and often going out several miles into the country to hold services in the afternoon. There were several places where he had little congregations meeting in school houses, to which he ministered, and his services were much sought by the country people for funerals, weddings and various meetings in the cause of temperance and anti-slavery. He seemed to me to be a missionary of the true apostolic order, ever ready to go where the humblest service could be rendered to any human being, glad to be the comforter and helper of men.

After a day or two passed with him in delightful fellowship he took me to Elgin, then a small village not much larger than Geneva, where he had gathered a new society and built an humble chapel. Here he introduced me to a number of pleasant families, to whom I ministered in my youthful, boyish way for the next two months. During this time I made occasional visits to Mr. Conant and passed many days in his family. We had an exchange and held a meeting of the Ministerial association at his house, where Rev. Rush R. Shippen, of Chicago, and myself with our host formed the entire association. But it was a good time. We held an evening service in the church and read essays and sermons to each other, interspersed with pleasant talk and rambles about the country.

One thing that much impressed me in this intercourse with Mr. Conant was his enthusiasm in his work. He thoroughly believed in it. He loved it and gave himself to it with untiring devotion. He was a man of warm and generous sympathies, and readily entered into the sorrows and joys of his fellow-beings; a man of sincere faith and

piety, whose highest ambition it was to be an humble follower of Jesus. He was a growing man, reaching out to larger thought and pressing on to a higher manhood.

Another thing which much impressed me was the high intellectual and moral character of the people whom he had drawn about him at Geneva. More genial, kindly, delightful people than the leading families of his church, I have seldom known, and they seemed to cherish a deep and tender love for him. My acquaintance with them during that summer forms one of the pleasantest memories of my life.

In after years I often met Mr. Conant at the meetings of the Western Conference and I met him once, I think, while he was a chaplain in the army; always the same cheerful, hopeful, loving spirit, always glad to help and cheer his fellow men, always true to the highest and best that he knew.

Such is my thought of him as I turn back the pages of memory. So is he enshrined in my heart, as a true friend and a faithful worker in the vineyard of the Lord. We may well say of him in the words of the quaint old poet, Herbert:—

‘The religious actions of the just,
Smell sweet in death and blossom in the dust.’ ”

NOTE:—In each of the three succeeding papers will be found further reference to Mr. Conant.—[EDS.]

Dedication Hymn.

WRITTEN BY EBEN CONANT AND USED AT THE DEDICATION OF
THE BUILDING, JANUARY 24, 1844.

O Thou whom Heaven cannot contain,
Much less the poor abodes of men,
Who yet in condescending grace
Dost find in humble hearts a place.

As children to their parents come
Or wanderers to their native home,
So to thy throne would we repair
With joy and praise and fervent prayer.

Our humble efforts deign to bless
And make this house thy dwelling place;
Here let our souls in Thee rejoice
While in thy praise we lift our voice.

Here let thy truth distill like dew
And here let souls be formed anew,
Thy saints be fed with living bread
And in their hearts thy spirit shed.

And when the grave shall be our bed
Then raise up others in our stead;
Let generations yet to be
Here learn to know and worship Thee.

Incidents and Reminiscences.

BY REV. L. C. KELSEY OF ELYRIA, OHIO.

AS introductory to what I wish to present, I will briefly refer to the class, of which I was a member, which was graduated from the Unitarian Theological School at Meadville, Pa., in June, 1854. This class consisted of Henry B. Burges, C. A. Staples, N. A. Staples, D. C. O'Daniels, T. C. Moulton, John Murray, C. C. Richardson, Chas. Ritter, W. C. Scandlin, Geo. Withington and myself. As some of these were, at an early day, ministers within the boundary of the Western Unitarian Conference I shall have occasion to refer to them. Nearly one-half of the members of this class died in early manhood. The only one living, and at present in the ministry, so far as I know, is C. A. Staples, pastor of the Unitarian Society at Lexington Mass.

After leaving Meadville and spending a few weeks in Massachusetts and Ohio, I proceeded with my little family to this place, and was received with a kindly greeting and made welcome to the hospitality of Brother and Sister Conant. This was in September, 1854, and at that time there were several places in Illinois where the prospect for organizing liberal societies seemed to be quite promising.

After surveying the field, and with Brother Conant's

advice and influence, I decided to make my first venture in Dixon, Ill., an enterprising place of about three thousand inhabitants. Here I found a few Unitarians from New England, who extended to me a very cordial welcome; they were greatly rejoiced at the prospect of organizing a liberal church, and entered hand and heart into the enterprise. These formed a nucleus around which were soon gathered a band of progressive, liberal-minded men and women.

Our first services were held in a hall and continued there for three months, after which the M. E. church was rented and service held there at two o'clock in the afternoon every Sunday, until our church was ready for occupancy. This edifice was built in Gothic style, costing about three thousand dollars, and capable of seating about three hundred persons. The dedication of this church, on April 9, 1856, was quite an important event, as this was then regarded as one of the western outposts of Unitarianism.

The services at the dedication were interesting and impressive and have always been a source of pleasant reflection. As some who are here to-day knew most of the ministers who were present on that occasion it may not be uninteresting to name them. The dedication sermon was preached by Rush R. Shippen of Chicago. He was assisted in the services by Brother Conant, Elder Bradley of Belvidere and Rev. H. L. Myrick of Cambridge, Mass. The installation of the pastor took place in the evening of the same day. Brother Conant preached the sermon. His topic was "The Personal Privileges of the Liberal Christian Minister." He treated his subject in a terse, manly and practical way and showed unmistakable evidence of deep thought and varied reading.

Rush R. Shippen of Chicago and John Murray of Rockford, Ill. took part in these services. Other services

were held in which Revs. Mason and Palmer of the Universalist church and Elders Bradley and Towner of the Christian denomination, also Rev. M. Kaig of the M. E. church and Rev. Mr. Ball of the Baptist church took active parts.

The work at Dixon was producing quite a strain upon the body and mind and I soon began to realize that my health was failing. I sought rest and recreation by visiting and exchanging with fellow laborers and embracing opportunities of holding services at various places in the surrounding country.

At Como and Sterling, where Brother Conant had preceded me, I found quite a band of New England Unitarians. At the former place there had been organized a small Unitarian Society; services were held among them selves, by reading sermons and selections, when they were unable to procure a speaker. I held services there a few times and formed some very pleasant acquaintances.*

There were other places where I was not received with so much cordiality, and I recall one occasion showing the spirit of intolerance as sometimes manifested. A friend invited me into the country to hold services at the school house in his neighborhood. He made an appointment for me and at the time designated I found the house well filled. I gave a short talk upon the principal features of Unitarianism, and so much interest seeming to be manifested I was induced to give notice that I would

* The origin of this move in Como was largely due to one earnest Unitarian family from Providence, R. I., Mrs. Susan Jarvis Cushing, a lady of rare strength of character and refinement, her daughter, now Mrs. Frank Cheney of South Manchester, Conn. and several of her sons who were all warm friends of Mr. Conant. Before this date the mother and daughter had returned to their New England home, but their influence remained and the sons were among the helpful friends referred to by Mr. Kelsey.—[EDS.]

speak there again in two weeks, in case it would not interfere with any other appointment; I was assured that it would not. Hiring a horse and carriage and taking with me a member of my society I started in the early evening for the place of meeting. Our surprise was great upon reaching the house to find it well lighted, quite a large congregation assembled and a preacher at the desk. We soon took in the situation, sat down among the people and had the benefit of a sermon which would not be tolerated in any pulpit to-day. At the close of the services I asked and obtained permission to say a few words and stated why I was there. The preacher in reply informed me that he was not responsible for the appointment at that particular time, as it had been made for him. I then concluded that some one in the neighborhood had perpetrated a joke at my expense and that other fields would be more pleasant and profitable for missionary work.

I recall some peculiar and pleasant incidents connected with my brief ministry. There is always a funny as well as a sober side to a minister's life and I had a brief experience in both.

At one time a young man, in search of a minister to conduct services at the funeral of his father, called to interview me in regard to my religious opinions; after some rather pointed inquiries he informed me that his father was not a member of any church and was regarded by his neighbors as an infidel. He then informed me that I was *just the man* he had been looking for and he had no doubt I would fill the bill. With this, rather doubtful compliment, I consented to go. The following day I was taken into the country to a rather secluded place in a valley, a distance of about ten miles, where there was a double log house which I found filled with people from far and near who had been notified that a Unitarian was to take charge

of the services. As I looked over the people assembled I thought I could detect in their faces indications of curiosity and deep interest.

The large audience and the novelty of the situation were quite inspiring and I tried to impress upon the people the thought the occasion seemed to suggest, that the life and the character we are living and forming will be continuous; that what we call death is only a transition period in the life of every man; that God is the father of all and that neither time nor place, nor condition in this world or in any worlds could limit His love; and that as we all belonged to a common brotherhood we should judge and honor our fellow-men, not by their opinions or creeds but by their lives and characters. After the services many took me by the hand and expressed a desire to hear more of this new faith. The occasion made a deep impression upon my mind and has ever been a green spot in my memory.

During the early part of my labors in Dixon, John Murray had received and accepted a call from the Unitarian Society at Rockford, and it was during his ministry that the Society completed and dedicated their beautiful church edifice. Mr. Murray's labors in Rockford covered a period of nearly three years. He then resigned and went East. Subsequently he went to England where he died about three years ago. At the time of his death he had charge of two societies.

During the years 1855 and 1856 Geo. Withington was preaching to a small Unitarian Society in Hillsborough, Montgomery Co., Ill. I recall with much pleasure a visit I enjoyed with him and his people in the summer of 1856. Of his subsequent history I have no knowledge.

Another member of the class of 1854, who for some years was one of the most prominent and promising young

ministers in the Western Unitarian Conference, was Nohor Augustus Staples, pastor of the Society at Milwaukee, Wis. from 1856 to 1860. A sketch of that earnest, beautiful life has been written by John W. Chadwick.

I recall several Universalist ministers who were among my most intimate friends and associates and who were doing good work for the spread of liberal views in northern Illinois, but time will not permit me to give them so much as a passing notice.

Brother Conant commenced his labors in a new field and with but few co-workers. His earnestness, the genial and friendly spirit manifested towards everyone with whom he came in contact, secured for him many warm friends of liberal tendency. At this distant day I can recall only a few of them. One with whom I became intimately acquainted and whom I greatly admired, deserves more than a passing notice. I refer to Ichabod Codding, an anti-slavery lecturer of great ability and eloquence. He was largely in sympathy with Mr. Conant in his religious views. He believed in the largest freedom for man in forming and enjoying his religious opinions and had started out upon independent lines of thought and action. While arousing communities and gaining converts to the anti-slavery cause by his wonderful eloquence, he was preparing the way for the liberal church. The success resulting from his labors in many places brought him prominently before the Western Unitarian Conference as a suitable person for missionary work, but fearing that he might make his anti-slavery sentiments too conspicuous he was not employed in an official way. He continued his independent labors in various fields until one year after the close of the war.

He died in 1866, leaving a noble example of fidelity to a grand principle—Human Freedom. How dear to that

earnest, humanity-loving soul must have been the words, "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord:" At the time Mr. Conant became acquainted with Mr. Codding the anti-slavery discussions were attracting much attention and I well remember a little incident which occurred in this church about the same time, causing no little stir and which made a deep impression upon my mind. It showed to the members that their pastor had the courage of his convictions and that he would not falter in denouncing oppression in whatever form it might appear, whether in church or state. I allude to the occasion of his preaching a sermon upon the terrible evil of human slavery as it then existed in our country. While in the midst of his most fervent utterances a prominent member of the society took his hat and in an excited and unceremonious manner left the church.

In the morning Brother Conant in referring to the incident remarked to me that he did not notice any great change in the appearance of things. The sun arose as usual, the sky looked as bright and as beautiful as ever, and such little episodes, however unpleasant, could not hinder the onward march of truth and the ultimate triumph of the right. During the early part of Mr. Conant's ministry, A. B. Fuller, a Unitarian and a brother of the renowned Margaret Fuller, was engaged in teaching at Belvidere, Ill. In connection with his duties as teacher in the Belvidere Academy he did some pioneer work in behalf of liberal Christianity. About this time Brother Conant did some missionary work in that vicinity which resulted in the formation of a small liberal society. Mr. Fuller left Belvidere early in 1845, going east for the purpose of preparing himself for the ministry.

The first regular minister of the society was Rev. Mr. Walworth, who remained but a short time. Subse-

quently the society had for a limited time other ministers, the last being Rev. Bradley. After he left in 1848, the society disbanded. Shortly after, a Universalist society was organized but concerning its history I have not the means of knowing.

Mr. Fuller was one of the first to enlist for the defense of the Union and one of the first to yield up his life. He was killed in battle.

There were some earnest and liberal-minded men in other denominations who had taken Mr. Conant into their fellowship. One of these was for some time preaching for the Universalist Society at St. Charles, Ill. He was not only an eloquent preacher, but poet and editor as well. I refer to Rev. Mr. Roundsville, who was known quite extensively in northern Illinois, and who did a grand work in the pulpit and by the pen for the cause of liberal Christianity.

Another co-laborer of a little later date was Rev. Mr. Slade, pastor of the Universalist Society at Aurora, Ill. He was a man of more than ordinary ability and a great admirer of Mr. Conant. I knew him quite intimately, having met him upon several occasions and I at one time exchanged pulpits with him.

I recall Elder Wickizer of Warrenville and Elder Towner of Belvidere, who were ministers in the so-called Christian denomination. They were self-educated, earnest men, serving their generation faithfully and in full sympathy with liberal religious ideas. These are a few of the brave ones who were contemporary with Mr. Conant in pioneer work.

Random Reminiscences.

BY MRS. JULIA DODSON SHEPPARD OF PENN YAN, N. Y.

I was six months old when the First Unitarian Society of Geneva was founded. I have no recollection of the event; possibly I had not then learned to think for myself, or perhaps I may have been absorbed in the contemplation of "infant damnation," a generally accepted doctrine at that date, and the belief, or rather disbelief, in a triune God had not then arrested my attention.

I have often heard my mother refer to the first sermon she heard questioning the trinity, she was shocked and began reading the bible, marking passages for and against it; great was her dismay to find the word, trinity, not in the book at all and the preponderance of evidence quite against it; she united with the society during Mr. Conant's pastorate; many little incidents of those early days she and my father often spoke of in my hearing. The little church was for some years quite the most stately edifice of the surrounding country. The Methodist society was holding services in the school house; Mr. Conant decided to offer the church to them, so one Sabbath, after the morning sermon, he tendered the use of

the church to them Sunday afternoons; there was a long and awkward pause, then the minister arose and said he could not accept the offer, 'he could not preach in a church where his Lord and Master was denied.' During Mr. Herbert's ministry that same society exchanged pulpits with him, seeming to have learned not to be unduly afraid of doubters.

During my childhood we lived for a time in the house next to Mr. and Mrs. Conant. My brother and I were often invited by the Conant children to attend the weddings which occurred frequently in the parsonage. Now and then we all laughed at the dress or embarrassment of the bride and her attendant bridegroom, then quite a time would elapse before we would be invited again, so we early learned to smile very softly at nuptials.

It was a solemn moment when Mr. Conant called his son John one Sabbath morning, because of whispering and laughing, to occupy the pulpit stairs during the remainder of his sermon; the younger portion of the congregation was overpowered by fears lest similar honours were hanging heavily over their heads in the near future. Mr. Charles Patten, at the close of the morning's service, in referring to John's blushes on that occasion, said, "no one can say now that our pastor has not one well 'red' son."

We always enjoyed hearing the Conant boys tell the following story of their mother: One Sunday afternoon Mr. Conant was holding services in a school house a few miles distant from Geneva, where he gave out a familiar hymn beginning with the words "Shine Forth," and finding no one present to commence the singing, turned to his wife who was with him, and asked her to lead the singing. She began "Shine Forth," but found she had pitched the tune too high to go on, so she paused and began a second time "Shine Forth," but what was her dismay to find this

time it was too low to continue, so she desisted and a third time tried to "Shine Forth," but the ludicrousness of it all overcame her and she gave up entirely. Mrs. Conant used to say, amid our laughter, she had never tried from that time to "shine."

The one act of Mr. Conant's which impressed me the most as a child, and has influenced me always, was an apology he once made for the manner and tone of a hasty speech on a political subject involving a principle to which he was a devoted adherent all his life. I never heard this referred to without much speculation. I wondered how he could do it, being a grown man, and believing firmly he was in the right. I thought then I should never apologize when I grew to be a woman, but all the while there beat in my heart a belief in that man's religion who could be sorry and say so; I have lived to learn, one ought "from the cradle to the grave" to be often sorry and say so.

We moved away from Geneva for several years, then went back. I was there during Mr. Woodward's pastorate, but was at an age when church affairs did not occupy great space in my mind; the one thing which impressed me was, Mr. Woodward allowed the young people of the society to dance, play cards and act charades in his house; this met with some criticism, but I believe the result proved there was less general dissipation among those who had this privilege than among those who were denied these amusements.

I cannot close this paper without reference to the women who were members of the Unitarian Society of Geneva when I was there a growing girl; they had then, they still have, an enduring influence over me. I am yet trying to order my conversation, my manners, my life after their model. "Strength and honour were their

clothing—they opened their mouths with wisdom, and in their tongues was the law of kindness—they looked well to the ways of their households and ate not the bread of idleness.” I, with many others “arise and call them blessed,” having known them a “Trust in all things high” comes easy to me.

I have lived the greater part of the half-century in orthodox communities, but I am still of the liberal faith, and have been thankful many times for the larger trust which that has seemed to bring me.

One of the most abiding memories for me of the power of that faith was my mother’s face during her last illness when an orthodox relative said to her: “I hope you realize no one can have eternal life except through belief in Jesus Christ.” My mother turned and with wide open eyes, said slowly and distinctly, “you know I do not believe that, and I assure you I am not afraid.”

Memories of Early Days

OF THE GENEVA CHURCH, BY MRS. MARIA LE BARON TURNER.

I have been requested to write some of my recollections of the earliest days of our little church, but when I put on my thinking cap, I am surprised as well as ashamed at the meagerness of my memories and their mundane character. When, however, I thought of the eloquent flights of fancy, the tender memorials and the entertaining historical articles that would be written, I concluded that perhaps a few remembrances of a superficial nature might not be out of place.

Of Mr. Conant's preaching my memory is very faint, as I was only twelve years old when he left us, but I remember the man himself well, and how we all loved him, and yet one of my most distinct recollections of that noble-hearted minister is one of my worldly little memories, how one Sunday the boys sat down in the back pews and fell to laughing and playing, as boys will do even ministers' sons, and Mr. Conant panned in the midst of his exhortation to sinners to repent and said, in his clear, decisive way: "John, you may come and sit here on the pulpit stairs." The dead silence that fell upon

the children of that congregation could be felt. In those days fathers feared not to rebuke their children.

I remember also a little social incident, connected with Mr. Conant. He was spending the evening at an informal gathering at the home of one of his parishioners. As the hostess passed cake to her guests, she arranged an extra large piece next her good minister as she passed the basket to him, but he reached over and took a smaller piece beyond. "Mr. Conant," said the good lady, "when I was a little girl I was taught to take the piece nearest me." "But," he responded with his bright, shrewd smile, "when I was a little boy I was taught never to take the largest piece."

I have another little memory of Mr. Conant, of a purely personal character. We children were in the back garden one evening, riding about on our horses, which horses were wooden sticks, possessed of greater or less degrees of life and spirit. We heard that some one was calling on our parents and, full of childish curiosity, at once put our steeds to full speed to ride to the front on a tour of discovery, exclaiming in full chorus; "Who is here? Who is here?" To our consternation instead of the elders being in the parlor they were sitting in front of the house enjoying the summer evening. My fractious steed had carried me within reach of a gentleman, who at once caught me and, as my pony fell lifeless at my feet, he drew me into his arms, saying laughingly; "I am here, and I have caught you," and he kissed me most tenderly. It was Mr. Conant, and I well remember how, in spite of my shame and embarrassment at our unintentional rudeness, I felt a rapture of delight at the affectionate caresses of my beloved minister, and when, after holding me some time, he released me I crept back to the other children feeling quite sanctified.

No one can recollect more distinctly the noble men and women who attended church in those bygone days. There was that lovely gentleman, Mr. Samuel Clark and his wife who was called by those who knew her best, "St. Polly;" conscientious Dr. LeBaron and precious, sympathetic Mrs. LeBaron, whose wise counsels and example served, in after years, as guides to so many of the young friends who gathered at her home, and her sister, Miss Carr, the dear "Auntie Carr" who is with us yet. Then there were the three Clark sisters, Harriet, Caroline and Ellen, whom we all remember better by their married names, Mrs. Patten, Mrs. Wilson and Mrs. Davis. Mrs. Davis did not live in Geneva after her marriage, but I never can forget when she was at church how she used to sing. She would open her mouth and the music would pour forth as free and clear as the song of a bird. They were all musical and when visitors would ask Mrs. Patten to play on the piano for them she would demurely reply: "Thank you, I don't play, Caroline plays." Then, after listening to some of Mrs. Wilson's delightful music, they would urge her to sing and she would respond with equal modesty: "I do not sing, Harriet sings," and so they would get even with each other. We hope they are all three singing together now in their home beyond the skies.

Then there was our lovely Mrs. Larrabee, with her great mother heart, and dear Mrs. Dodson who always sat in the same pew and never looked a day older as the years rolled by in tens and twenties. She never forgot the little child she lost and, I think, never heard a reference to death or little children from the pulpit without the tears of tender memories filling her loving eyes.

Of Mr. Woodward's pastorate, my memories are very pleasant. His was the reign of sociability, as was most natural, since his own family contained every ele-

ment of social charm, a cheerful, hospitable host, a delightful hostess and charming young people. Cannot all those who were young people in the old church days remember that it was during Mr. Woodward's stay here that we enjoyed the most delightful social gatherings of all kinds? There were celebrations and entertainments of tableaux and music, amateur theatricals that have never been excelled, church sociables that were really sociable and one entertainment, that stands forth most distinctly, was the pretty cantata, "The Flower Queen," though to Mr. Harvey the success of that was due, as he was the manager and inspirer and singing master. I think it was sung for the benefit of the church, and so can be appropriately mentioned here, but you who remember it will not object to dwelling on the memory. How sweet was our lovely rose, Nellie Larrabee; how stately Julia Dodson, the sunflower; how charming was Louise Towner, the hollyhock, and how sweetly modest, her younger sister, as the crocus; while Alice Woodward, as dahlia, filled the old court room with her fresh young voice. Then there were Theresa Clark Mollie Larrabee and Mary Yates, singing their duets and trios together, and the pretty groups of heather bells and bright faced chorus singers, while Emory Abbott sang the part of the recluse in his sweet, sympathetic voice. I can see them all as if it were yesterday.

Thinking of singing reminds me of another of Mr. Woodward's specialties, his choirs. When he came among us we had a good choir, led, I think, by Mr. Harvey and composed of Julia Plato, Carrie Larrabee, Mary Wells, Charlie Stevens and, unless my memory fails me, Henry Pierce; but when the Harveys went to Aurora and the Stevens soon after to Batavia, we were in danger of being left "to die with all our music in us." This

emergency was Mr. Woodward's opportunity and he came to the rescue, organized and trained the older young people and, from that time on during his stay, the music was one of the most attractive features of our service. First was the older set of girls, Nellie Larrabee, Alice Woodward, Mary and Lizzie Long, Kate and Mary Curtis, Lucy Moore, Julia Dodson and others, while the basso profundos were, Alfred Woodward, Russell Jarvis, young George Patten, Emory Abbott and others, especially A. W. Adams who came among us at this time and whose fine voice was heard in our choir for nearly a quarter of a century. Next came the younger set, Lizzie Woodward, Theresa Clark, Libbie Towner, Maria LeBaron, Ella Plato and Minnie Wright, with Jessie Nelson to play the melodeon, and in those good, old days the choir sang in a gallery that went across the back of the church and, during the singing of the hymns, we all turned round and looked up at the fresh young faces and enjoyed that as much as the music, that was often poured forth with more vim than skill. Mr. Woodward had in his own family an entire quartette of fine voices, and often did Mrs. Woodward's grand alto give finish and culture to the younger voices that formed the choir.

Another thing that was carried to perfection during Mr. Woodward's stay was church decoration, especially at Christmas time. We were not hampered by artistic criticism, nor fear of repeating ourselves, nor was the church too good or new to drive nails into, wherever they seemed desirable. The sole and only idea was to make the church a bower of beauty, and so we nailed long festoons of evergreens everywhere and hung up crosses and anchors and wreaths and put texts of green letters over windows and pulpit and gallery, and that homely old gallery became, for the time being, a thing of beauty, a

living platform, a green frame for the sweet singers who chanted the Christmas hymns. And that dear old pulpit! I would love to see that pulpit once more. I think I have heard it called ugly, but I cannot remember it so. It was beautiful to my youthful eyes, and such a fine thing to trim. We could wind green all around the pillars and nail it about the top and bottom, and make such a mass of greenery of it, that we thought it perfect.

I could continue these memories to more recent times, but have already used more space than I expected, and have written more for my own amusement than with any idea that this will be used during the semi-centennial exercises.

Collation.

AT THE HOME OF MR. J. D. HARVEY, SATURDAY JUNE 11 AT
1 P. M., REV. GEO. B. PENNEY PRESIDING.

AFTER partaking of the refreshments served by the ladies, Mr. Penney called the guests to order, under the shade of the trees where they had assembled, by saying:

I purpose now turning this gathering into an Anarchist meeting. You need not be alarmed as I do not intend to set you to killing policemen or blowing up public buildings. I simply wish to put this session on the basis of the Anarchist's ideal state where each shall have due regard for the other.

By a glance at the cards which are in your hands you will see that our program is unlimited as to quality, unlimited as to possible quantity, and that we are limited only as to time. As American citizens we resent anything in the nature of a gag law, and if we conform to the true ideal of the Anarchist, the speakers will have due regard for the audience and the audience for the speak-

NOTE:—The responses were stenographically reported.

ers and each speaker for those who are to follow, and we shall find repressive measures unnecessary.

A Cambrian Prophet. REV. JENKIN LLOYD JONES.

It takes a revealing soul to understand God's revelation.

From observation of similar occasions I conceive it to be the duty of a Toastmaster to make pleasantly apparent the fitness of the various speakers to respond to the subjects assigned them; but no words of mine are necessary to make it fully apparent why Mr. Jones, kinsman of R. L. Herbert the fourth pastor of the society should respond to the first toast on our list.

MR. JONES' RESPONSE.

The task assigned to me carries me far beyond the connection of Mr. Herbert with the Geneva Society. I remember when a soldier boy in the tented field, my father, ever quick to discover any note of progress, got into the habit of sending me frequently a copy of the Drych, a Welsh paper published in Utica, N. Y., which gave frequent correspondence from Vermont, signed by the letters, "R. L. H." and my father used to send word along that there was a "man that would soon grow too large for his orthodox fetters." "There was the man to be looked for." The world went on and the visits of the Drych became less frequent to camp. I had lost sight of the initials. My father had not. When in the first year of my work in Janesville I began publishing those little lesson leaves that were used in the Sunday Schools in our primitive times, I received one day an order, briefly expressed, but written in the most exquisite penmanship, from Fair Haven, Vt., enclosing subscription for copies of my Sunday School lesson, signed "R. L. Herbert." Instantly the "R. L. H." of my war experience came to me, and I wrote to my father at once that I had struck "R. L. H." again.

Soon after that I learned that a Methodist church in Iowa was in theological trouble; and that they had sent East for a Methodist minister, who was also in theological trouble, to preach the dedication sermon of the church at Marion, Iowa. It turned out that it was my mystic correspondent "R. L. H." From that sprung a correspondence which a few months afterwards brought him to Janesville, Wis., to one of our Wisconsin conference meetings. In the press of delegates visiting the town on the first even-

ing, there crowded to the front a little man with long hair; without waiting for introduction or any preliminary courtesy, he said, "Is this Jones?" I said, "Yes." And then I found myself clasped in the iron embrace of this man, more hearty and as explosive as that with which school girls greet each other after a long absence. From that time to the day of his death, our spirits clasped as ardently as his arms had enveloped me. I found him indeed a "Cambrian Prophet." The sauce he gave to life was none of your sickly sweet preserve, but a sauce flavored with a sense of the imperfection and the weakness of the world. His earnest words were seasoned with a painful sense of the bad there is about us, and so of course his life burned itself out on those high prophetic plains which measures life not "by figures on a dial, but by heart beats." His oft quoted line, which he adapted for himself, was taken from the lines of one of the old Druid Bards, which says, "Let me love and thrill or let me die." When the summons came to attend his funeral away off under the shadows of the Rocky Mountains, I was unable to reach there in time to discharge that tender office, but five days after the earth closed over his coffin I stood under that cloudless sky, over the grave that held all that was perishable of R. L. Herbert. The next Sunday I stood with his weeping people in the little church at Denver and shared with them, and all others who ever came within the reach of his electrical spirit, a sense that something had gone out of the world when his voice was stilled. So I am glad to stand here this moment with you in this glad anniversary of this Society, to claim a part with you in these blessed memories, and to feel, as I said to one of your members a moment ago, that however doubtful my case may be when I present myself at the gate over which St. Peter presides, if the balance should be made out against me in any and every other respect, I think if, as a last resort, I say, "But dear St. Peter, please remember this, I had something to do in giving to Geneva, that Saint's Rest on earth, as pastor to that Church of blessed usefulness, R. L. Herbert, James West, and Thomas Byrnes," I think he will swing the gates open and say, "Come in!"

A Man without Guile.

MRS. J. D. HARVEY.

—*Amid all life's quests
There seems but worthy one—to do men good.*

The Geneva Society might justly claim that its chosen leaders have been men of marked individuality. You heard this morning about the "Man in Earnest" and Mr. Jones has told you of the "Cambrian Prophet" and

you will now hear from Mrs. Harvey, who speaks from personal reminiscence of "A Man without Guile," George Wheelock Woodward, pastor from 1858 to 1863.

MRS. HARVEY'S RESPONSE.

It has fallen to my lot to do a difficult thing, to try to do justice to the memory of our second pastor, "The Man without Guile" as he has been called. My difficulty is, to satisfy myself at this distance from the meagre memories of thirty years ago.

To talk now from the impressions of a girl of twenty about such a man would be inexcusable, if it were not my only opportunity to do justice to a man, whom I fear I did not sufficiently appreciate when he was with us. Young people are very critical and their judgment seems to them equal to any test, and it makes me blush now as I recall the superior smiles we indulged in when we thought we detected an old sermon. How could girls of twenty know that such sermons as his, from the text, "Speak every man the truth of his neighbor" could not be preached too many times? I doubt if even now we realize after thirty years' experience, that we actually *need* such a sermon about once a month. I think ministers must get very much discouraged over the curiosity that their people show to see how finely and strongly they can say things, and how many *new* things they can say, but never want to hear them the second time, nor by any chance try any of their plans, set forth so eloquently, and see how they might work.

George Wheelock Woodward was born at Hanover, New Hampshire, in 1810. He inherited culture, intellect and refinement from a long line of ancestors, who were all either Professors or Presidents of Dartmouth College. One English ancestor sleeps in Westminster Abbey, and among his American progenitors he numbered Miles Standish, also John Woodward and Ebenezer Wheelock who founded the Moore Charity School for Indian children in northern New Hampshire about a century ago. His father was judge of the Supreme Court of New Hampshire, and died when George was only eight years old, leaving him to the care of a most judicious mother, who supervised his education with the aid and advice of her brother, the late George Ticknor of Boston.

He entered Dartmouth at an early age, graduating with honor, and afterwards entered the Divinity School at Harvard where he was a close student, entering with earnestness and enthusiasm into the study of his profession.

After graduating he preached some years in New England, and then removed to Galena in this State. There he began a sort of itineracy, preaching alternately at Galena, Dubuque and Savanna, but he was in advance of the time, and after some years of

faithful endeavor, the Unitarian work was abandoned, with such heartache and disappointment as you ministers may understand. In the meantime Mr. Woodward had made for himself a home in Galena and identified himself with the interests of the city. He inaugurated the system of public schools in that city and was elected County Superintendent of schools and afterwards City Clerk and Collector of taxes, filling all the positions most acceptably.

Aware of Mr. Woodward's efficiency in any position which he had filled, in 1857 his long time friend, Gen. J. D. Webster, induced him to come to Geneva, in his interest to take charge of the office of the Danford Reaper Company, and soon after, upon Mr. Conant's departure for Rockford, this society invited him to minister to them, and he found himself again at work in his chosen profession. The old time fire flamed up again clear and bright as he bore testimony to the faith that was within.

I find in reading over his sermons, as I have been privileged to do recently, that most of them were written in the early years of his ministry, before he came to Geneva, but they were remodeled and retouched for our benefit as I well remember. As I re-read these as they were written during the second quarter of the century, I am impressed with the vigor and freshness of the thoughts.

I have heard it said that Mr. Woodward was in advance of his time. I see now how it was true. He does not seem to have been much interested in what we might call radical reforms. Probably he never heard in those days of charity organization yet, when he preached the sermon from the text, "Pure religion and undefiled before God the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world;" when he preached this sermon, he put all the spirit of the motto of the Charity Organization Society, "Not alms but a friend," into the word *visit*, he made it appear that true charity was not in that easiest way of all, giving money, but giving one's self, and that self must be kept pure and unspotted from the world. The emphasis which he laid upon the fact that the two *must* go together, was a sermon in itself. How much of such charity is there in the world to-day? And yet this young man pleaded for it over fifty years ago, as his Master had done nearly twenty centuries before.

He saw beyond many of the plans for reforming the world, and saw what Kindergartners, individualists, and all the most advanced people of our time see now, that it is the individual that must be pure and good, that reforms must come from within, not without; and he preached that we must analyze and judge ourselves, and we shall see ourselves rightly. He drew a strong picture of the man stripped of all seeming, standing at the bar of his own conscience, "He sees that his innocence was inaction, that he had been unrespected, because unknown. He thought himself just, but was only legal, temperate while he was a cowardly venturer to the

brink of excess; thought himself charitable, but finds he never made a disinterested sacrifice in his life; hospitable, but he was only ostentatious; zealous for truth, but it was only for a system; patriotic, but he was only a partisan; forgiving but only cowardly. Can we bear to be stripped of our fancied excellencies, and have our motives ready for analysis? Do we venture to look with a steady eye into our own hearts? Dare we read to the bottom of the page?"

I wish I had time to tell you how exacting this young man was of himself, how honesty in business, uprightness in everything was his standard. It has been said of him that he carried this too far to succeed. Perhaps he did, if success means making money and knowing how to keep it. He was a thorough business man in the best sense of the word. Promptness, accuracy, thrift, talent in an artistic way, and public spirit he had. A man who had the foresight, the energy to inaugurate the public school system in his town, was surely a success.

His favorite text, "Whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God," he carried into his every day life, his business and social relations. He taught it in the way he drilled the choir and managed the Sunday School, always drawing out the best work and endeavor of the young people in everything they did; helping them to make a success of everything they undertook, if it were only entertaining themselves.

I remember his manner, dignified but cheery, sympathetic, magnetic but quick, imperative, and, as one of our musical friends used to say, staccato in his style. He was kind, considerate, but rather strict in his family, always busy working out his mechanical and artistic ideas in many pretty pieces of furniture and household conveniences. He believed in the dignity of labor and taught it to his children and showed infinite wisdom and patience in some of the most difficult problems of life. He had many good ideas regarding woman's dress, which they are only now beginning to see. He could teach your mothers how to take better care of their babies, as I have occasion to remember.

With Schuyler Colfax he was active in establishing the I. O. O. F. in this state, and was grand master of the state and grand representative. He was also a Mason but was never so active in that order.

When the wild storm of war spread over all the land he was among the earliest to the front, and shared in all the terrors and hardships of those first dreadful days. Fort Henry, Fort Donaldson, Shiloh, were names whose meaning he knew only too well. After more than a year of most trying hardships, when his health had utterly failed, he was "honorably discharged;" the surgeon said, "that he might go home and die peacefully with his family." There are some here who will remember the solemn day when the

two ministers came back to the little church together, and one gave no token in return for the loving greetings, but lay speechless and cold, and the other, (only a wreck) said a few, trembling, parting words, before you bore him away to sleep among kings.

Little by little he fought his way back to a trifle firmer hold on life, but the day was forever darkened. His eyesight was much impaired, preventing him from very active work the rest of his life, excepting a few years he held the position of Professor in the college at Fulton for the soldiers' sons. There his influence was fine upon the youth about him.

Few of the young people who came under his influence but were the better for it. His home and home life impressed every one who came within its influence as very sunny and bright. No friend ever crossed the threshhold of the Woodward house without being made gladly and heartily welcome; and after all, is not home influence more potent and far reaching than any other, especially upon the young? And it is in behalf of the young people of the church at that time, that I gladly pay this tribute of affection and grateful remembrance to the second pastor of our little church on the corner.

Other Pioneers,

REV. T. B. FORBUSH.

*Nor much fastidious as to how and when:
Yet seasoned stuff and fittest to create
A thought-staid army or a lasting state.*

We feel that this is a celebration not only of the Geneva Unitarian Society, but that it is a celebration of Unitarianism in the West; and especially of the Western Movement which the Geneva church seems to typify in so many ways. We will hear from Mr. Forbush, a man who, from his position, as overlooking the field is well fitted to tell us something of "Other Pioneers."

MR. FORBUSH'S RESPONSE.

It is one of the felicities of being a Unitarian minister, that you are perfectly sure, if you only live long enough, when you die you will be reckoned one of the Saints; and as I think back over the list of men whom in the early years of my ministry I was privileged to know in this western country, it seems to me that they all ought to have the "St." prefixed to their names. This church in order of establishment was the eighth church west of the Alleghanies. The 'pioneer church was the church at Mead-

ville, founded by that grand old man, Hiram Huidekoper, in 1825. Through the influence of Mr. Huidekoper, there came to Cincinnati and Louisville Ephraim Peabody and James Freeman Clarke, both establishing themselves for a little while in those Southern towns in 1830; then in 1831 came William G. Eliot to St. Louis. In 1836 the church of the Messiah in Chicago got itself organized, though who its first pastor was I do not know. In 1840 the church at Quincy was established and in 1842 this church at Geneva. When it was my privilege first to make the acquaintance of the west, Hosmer at Buffalo, Stebbins at Meadville, Livermore at Cincinnati, Heywood at Louisville, Eliot at St. Louis, Shippen at Chicago, Mumford at Detroit, Billings at Quincy, and your own Conant here in Geneva, were the ministers of the West. That was in 1853; and of those men only three now remain to us. Two with the very aureola of sainthood around their reverend heads; those dear old men, Heywood at Louisville and Livermore in his retreat up among the hills of New Hampshire; while Shippen is our honored minister at the Nation's Capital. At that same time or very soon afterwards, there came to Alton, Haley with his beautiful young wife; his friend Withington following very soon afterwards to Hillsboro. About the same time, for they were all classmates, John Murray organized the Unitarian church at Rockford, and Kelsey, Conant's brother-in-law, established himself at Dixon.

The first sermon that I gave in the state of Illinois was spoken in the little church at Dixon, where the voice of a liberal minister, I am sorry to say, has not been heard for ever and ever so long.

What shall I say of these men? Simply that they were faithful soldiers in the beginning of a crusade here in this western country against the old theology, and in favor of the enlightened liberal religion in which we now rejoice. Some of them succeeded. In the sight of men some of them failed. The matter of success or failure was not so much a matter of faithfulness and earnestness as it was a matter of location. I am told that William G. Eliot preached the first winter in St. Louis half the time to less than a dozen people. St. Louis grew and William G. Eliot's church grew with it. My friend Kelsey went to Dixon and preached there to a congregation larger than Eliot's. But Dixon did not grow and Kelsey was forced to leave.

I must not dwell upon these early pioneers; I can only mention them. Their very names will call up to you memories more sweet and more refreshing than any which my words would awaken. Just so it is to-day all over this great western country. For where fifty years ago there were seven churches west of the Alleghanies, to-day there are between one hundred and thirty and one hundred and forty churches, and a great many of them are working among just the same obstacles, with just the same possible chances of success or failure, that Geneva had fifty years ago: that Rockford,

and Dixon and Alton had afterwards. I was very much interested in the paper which we heard this morning concerning Mr. Conant, because it recalled to me so vividly just the things that are coming into my daily life now, of men working here and there on the wide plains of Dakota, in the fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains, and away up in the frozen wilds of Manitoba; working just the same, whether in log cabins or in little school houses, wherever they can get a chance to speak the word which is to them and to many of their hearers the word of life. And when I recall how some of them do not get any more than that two hundred and fifty dollars which Mr. Conant received, and have to take some of that in "truck," then I feel that the conditions of pioneering are not over yet in this country. There is pioneering still to be done here in Illinois. There is pioneering all the way west until you strike the Pacific Ocean. And when it is all done here, we may be left to pioneer in the Sandwich and Fiji Islands.

Friends, this same spirit that stimulated Conant when he planted himself here at Geneva is what we want in our young men to-day, and the same spirit that animated the people of Geneva when Conant planted himself here is the spirit we need all over this wide West to-day. I firmly believe that wherever there is that spirit in the man and that spirit in the people, success is sure.

Let me tell a little story, to illustrate the other side of the case. Why did Geneva succeed and Dixon fail? The morning after I preached at Dixon I was riding into Chicago with a Dixon man who came and sat by my side and said to me very confidently "My friend, there can be built just the biggest church right here in Dixon or anywhere in the state of Illinois, provided you will send us the right man." "Now," he said, "We could easily raise a thousand dollars a year for Starr King." That is the secret of the whole thing. Geneva took the man that came to it and gave him what they could. Dixon waited for Starr King at a thousand dollars a year, and is waiting yet.

Letter,

ROBERT COLLYER.

I don't think I ever heard of a Unitarian during the first eighteen or twenty years of my life, except in terms that tended to prejudice my mind against them as a class of people to avoid as I would avoid a pestilence. The one man who did more than any other to remove that prejudice was Robert Collyer in the few times that I heard him at the University Chapel, and occasionally meeting him at the Sage College table. And although he

cannot be with us to-day he has sent his greeting, which I will call upon Mr. Harvey to read.

LETTER READ BY MR. HARVEY.

DEAR FRIENDS:—

I would love to be with you when you eelebrate your golden wedding in the chureh made sacred to me by many memories, but I cannot come and so must send my greeting and blessing by what the Scotch call "a scart o' my pen."

But it comes from my heart you may be sure beeause you are enshrined there, and as far away as I am from you, when once and again I find some one who can tell me how you fare; it is almost as when I light on a man from the old home nest over the sea, so eager I am to hear all about you and wipe the film from the pieture I treasure of the old chapel and of those who gathered there when I first came to know you more than thirty years ago. You had not come to your silver wedding even then, but had given bonds for this you are to celebrate in the faithful keeping of the vows you made to have and to hold a chureh of your faith and order in Geneva "for rieher, for poorer, for better, for worse," so long as you should live, and to maintain her as we try to maintain our homes in all good will and good fellowship toward the churehes of other names but still to say, here is our home place and worthy of all our love.

And it was no wonder that I should be drawn to you and yours beeause it was my good fortune to know your first minister and to count him very soon among my dear friends; to see him often in the two years that lay between our first meeting and the time when he went as chaplain to give his life to the Republic; to render my poor tribute to his rare and noble manhood when his dust was brought home for burial, and to write a memoir of his good, true life. And it was in writing the memoir that I caught the thread of the story of your church he gathered and organized fifty years ago and of the little band of men and women who were his "helpers in the Lord;" the noble and beautiful story of the faith and courage which lay in the sowing that has ripened for your reaping and happy harvest home; how a hope dawned first that such a chureh might be gathered—rather a forlorn hope I said as I read his journals, but here was the man to lead it—and the twenty all told who said, we will follow, and so the hope won the day by faith and courage. So the house of the Lord was built at whieh he worked as he found the time with his own clever hands and then from the date of his settlement to the close of his ministry among you of sixteen years he was only absent from his own pulpit on three Sundays.

Nor could the pulpit and parish, with what these mean to so

many of us now, satisfy his desire to be "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." He must labor with his own hands at many things besides the church that he might not be a burden to you when you were all poor together in this world's goods and only rich in faith and hope. He must do many things one never thinks of doing now, that he might make ends meet and tie, and use the pioneer's axe and saw on week days as truly as he used the Bible on Sundays. And so in the journal he left there is the raciest record of minister and man I have ever laid eyes on. Sunday is sacred but the week day's work is blended of the secular and sacred while all flames sacred as you read because of the man as he tells you day by day how he "Wrote at a sermon and made a door. Worked at a sermon and doctored sore eyes. Made a plan for a sermon and a pair of quilting frames. Read Neander and made a chair. Wrote at a sermon and drew wood, snow two feet deep. Doctored a sick horse and cut wood. Read Neander and horse died. Read Neander and mended a pump. Wrote at a sermon, read Neander and made a wheelbarrow. Planned a sermon and made a bedstead for the cobbler."

The cobbler was a cripple, helpless and very poor when he came to live among you. He could mend shoes if he could find a place to live and work in, but there was no place. Well, your minister built a place for him and furnished it with his own hands; got him all the wood he wanted for the winter, sawed, split and piled it for him; got in provisions for him. You gave him work to do, who are still alive and remain, and the result was the happiest cobbler in Kane county, with never a doubt in his heart about such a *liberal* Christianity. So the story stands to his name first and then to yours of the early years when he was your minister and faithful friend, while he has no word to say of a day lost in dismal reflections over the contrivs of nature and the world we live in, or in growling because things do not always run to suit Augustus H. Conant, no report of a fevered Saturday or a blue Monday. And so he being dead, yet speaketh on the day of your jubilee and it is all as healthy as well baken brown bread, and apples, sweet and sound to the core. I mind also with affection the minister who was with you when we first foregathered Mr. Woodward whose face was a benediction. He also was my friend, but here I must pause and only stir up your minds by way of remembrance, leaving the story of the later years to be told as it lies in your own hearts and minds.

But may I say now that in these years I have wondered once and again whether the good old church would hold on to her life in the hard times you have had to meet and master; but there you are and will be, when this script comes to you, singing the song of your golden wedding and looking forward from that to your well rounded century. And then from that as my faith and hope stands

those who will be with you as little children now, may be so great of heart that they will only be content to look forward to the thousand years when the small one of the faith we hold has become a great nation, for sure I am that this truth of the one living and true God, our Father on which our churches are founded, will be that of our common Christendom in the good time coming, but greater still and nobler then as the harvest is greater and nobler than the sowing of the seed, for believe me,

"Through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of
the suns."

Indeed always yours,

New York, May 23, 1892.

ROBERT COLLYER.

Early Women.

MRS. MARY P. JARVIS.

*Through suffering and sorrow thou hast passed
To show us what a woman true may be.*

You heard it said this morning that "This has always been a woman's church" and now Mrs. Mary P. Jarvis, one of the women who helped to give us such an honorable reputation will tell us something of the other "Early Women."

MRS. JARVIS' RESPONSE.

It is rather hard for you, after hearing these speeches, which must have been so clear to you, to be obliged to listen to one who is not accustomed to public speaking.

Of the work of the women in the earliest days of the church I have no personal knowledge, but the Church and Sunday School in which, I was interested from the time we came to Geneva, in 1855, showed the effect of their faithful work. Among these, and of those whose work had then ceased were, Mrs. Scotto Clark, Mrs. Betsey Stelle Carr, and Mrs. Mary Jane Whiting, (who was indefatigable in the work while here, and continued her aid, even after her failing health required her to leave Geneva,) and others whose names are unfamiliar to me.

I found the Church, Unitarian as it was, had already inaugurated two Saints, St. Polly and St. Maria—Mrs. Sam'l Clark and Miss Maria Clark—all who knew them, know that they were worthy of canonization.

The first thing which struck me as a newcomer, was the hospitality which welcomed us to the church and made it a home to us.

Though a Unitarian from childhood my first home-feeling in a church was in the little church of Geneva. As an illustration of this hospitality, I well remember that one Sunday when Mrs. Chas. Patten called for me (as was her frequent custom) she said, "We must have very little to say to each other to-day, for there are many strangers present, and we must devote ourselves to them."

The teachers of the Sunday School were chiefly women; a few of the men (to their praise be it spoken) also had classes. An incident in which Mrs. Chas. Patten was concerned as a teacher, occurs to me, an amusing effect of Unitarian teaching. In Mrs. Patten's class was a little black girl whom Miss Orton had taken to bring up. Going home from Sunday School the child passed through our place, and was attracted by the ripe, red cherries, climbed the trees and helped herself bountifully. Miss Orton tried to bring her to repent of her wrongdoing, but in vain. "Oh," said the child, "There is no hell, Mrs. Patten says so. I ain't afraid."

This hospitality of which I have spoken, was shown in the homes of these women as well as in the church. I well remember the pleasant social gatherings at Mrs. Chas. Patten's, who having no children, was more free for social duties but not infrequently the gatherings were at Mrs. Wilson's, Mrs. Dodson's, Mrs. Larabee's, Mrs. LeBaron's, Mrs. Geo. Patten's and at many other of the homes. Gatherings for charitable purposes, for Sunday School teachers, etc. I have not time for the further mention of names—I wish to make no invidious distinctions. I can only say of these women that they did what they could.

It was a great pleasure to me to feel with what unanimity they worked, each doing what the circumstances of her separate life made possible; but all zealous for the success and welfare of Church and Sunday School. I remember no dissensions, even no differences; all was harmonious combination for the *one* purpose—the success of the little Church so dear to them all.

The Original Geneva,

MR. B. W. DODSON.

—methinks I would not grow so fast,
Because sweet flowers are slow and weeds make haste.

This morning I welcomed you first to Geneva. Geneva is just now trying to have a boom; at least, we are growing a little, and I know you will be interested in knowing something about the early days of our city. I

will call upon Mr. Dodson to tell us of the "Original Geneva."

MR. DODSON'S RESPONSE.

Mr. Chairman, having no address to offer you to-day I will, with your permission, speak my excuses from the floor, or from the ground, properly speaking. I had not thought to say anything, but this fetching poetry that you have put into the toast for the "Original Geneva" is a great temptation, and if I made no further address it would be to inquire the meaning of that poetry applied to Geneva. I am not sure as to whether the inference is that Geneva is growing too fast or that there is a superabundance of weeds here. Perhaps it might be claimed both ways. In lieu of attempting to speak on the "Original Geneva," which I am sure you will all agree must have been a very beautiful Geneva, judging from the reports we hear about it, I have thought to offer a suggestion, and with your permission, Sir, I would like to suggest that prior to the friends leaving this assemblage that they shall take occasion, each and every one of them to sign the visitors' register which has been started here, as friends in Geneva would like to retain a written record of everybody, every individual who has honored us with his presence to-day. I have nothing further to add, Sir.

Poem—*Fifty Years.* MRS. JULIA DODSON SHEPPARD.

We are now to have what is always regarded as a great treat, an Author's Reading. You will notice on the back of our little card a poem by Mrs. Sheppard, which she has kindly consented to read to us, and I hope that she will see fit, or that the spirit will move her, to talk to us also.

MRS. SHEPPARD'S READING.

My friends, it is a disastrous thing to invite a person to any entertainment who thinks she writes poetry. I have been proud this winter because I have been making butter, all my relatives have had a portion of that butter, and once when invited out, I took my butter with me, and said to my friend, "You have heard of certain poets who when invited out to tea, ask, 'wouldn't you like to hear my last poem?'" I only ask, would you like some of my last butter? My friend replied, "I can stand the butter, but I could not the poetry." I thought when Mr. Penney asked me to

read my own poem, how proud that friend would be if she could hear me on this occasion.

Fifty years! Oh little church upon the plain,
Tell us your story, is it loss or gain?
You who for half a century have stood
Contending for the striving after Good,
Instead of unbelievable belief;
Hold you the battlefield in joy or grief?

* * * *

The old walls seem to echo all around,
"With everlasting gain I hold the ground;
Here have true men and patient women stood,
And lived, and died, just trying to be good,
Thus have they strengthened others for the strife
'Gainst sin and self, and blessed this earthly life,
Thus to their children's children given
'None other than a ladder up to heaven.' "

Letter

REV. JNO. R. EFFINGER.

We had hoped to have with us one who has always taken a deep interest in this Society, Mr. Effinger, but he sends his greeting, which I will read to you.

MR. EFFINGER'S LETTER.**MY DEAR MR. PENNEY:—**

As the week advances and the cold, damp weather shows no disposition to depart from the even tenor of its way, I think I must be content to be with you in spirit and by letter, rather than in the bodily presence.

Please convey to the First Unitarian Society of Geneva my hearty congratulations on having attained the ripe age of fifty years. It is a great event in the history of one of our western Unitarian churches to celebrate its semi-centennial. It is a matter not only of local, but general interest to our body. If I am not mistaken there are but few older churches west of the Alleghanies, namely those at Louisville, St. Louis, Chicago and Quincy.

All honor to the pioneers of our faith in this western land! I would offer my little tribute of thanks and praise to the men and women, who, planting their homes on the wide and then lonesome prairies of Illinois, set up there the beacon-light of a religion of reason and the moral sense. There are a few of us whose hearts have not glowed with new zeal on reading the story of the "Man in Earnest," who, with equal skill and grace could plough a field

or make a churn, or preach a sermon, or minister to the passing soul. How dear was his name to every Unitarian in the State, and how treasured the memories and associations of this church at Geneva, which owes its existence to his consecrated energy and enthusiasm!

Under the careful husbandry of such hands as Conant, Ed-dowes and Herbert your Society took such vigorous root that we must now look upon it as one of the established things,—if Unitarians can ever consent to consider anything in the shape of a church as “established.” As you meet together the hearts of many who are absent will be turning toward Geneva with congratulations on your past and good hopes for your future. Regretting that I cannot be with you and with hearty good wishes for a successful meeting and continued prosperity,

I am yours most cordially,

Chicago, June 9, 1892.

JOHN R. EFFINGER.

Letter.

PROF. SAMUEL CLARKE.

I will also call upon Mrs. Agnes Hoyt, who has a letter that she will read to you.

LETTER READ BY MRS. HOYT.

After a few words to myself he says:—

* * * * * The little picture of the dear old church on your invitation stirs many memories of my early life that are among the things to me most valued, held most sacred.

I have to recall the Sundays with each one of our dear good people in their well-known seats. I remember clearly the delightful feeling of being entirely at home among the best of good loving friends; the blessed sense of peace and helpfulness that came equally from our good friend in the pulpit and from those with whom we sat. Such a center of genuine goodness to stimulate and help everything that makes for true living, carried on bravely and joyously and withal, humbly, I have never found elsewhere.

With this I always associate my impressions of the Prairie life as I came to know it in those days. The picture is very vivid to me of June afternoons on the fields that reached the horizon and knew no bounds. There never was a bluer sky, light clouds never sailed more freely; the afternoon breeze was delicious in its sweet freshness; the notes of the prairie birds are clearer than all others; the beautiful prairie flowers were out in endless profusion, fragrant and brilliant; and the wonderful insect life in countless numbers seemed full of cheer and joy as they went swiftly about their beneficent work. What a glorious world that was! How it

touched and stimulated every particle and fibre of worth within one.

Never has there come to me such a sense of glad freedom, of unbounded room and beautiful, good things for all, as there on the prairie. Everything was so pure and true and unlimited that it seemed to be God's storehouse, and it was the greatest privilege to be there.

And so two of my most prized memories of the West, most prized because they have been most helpful to me, are of our church with you dear people, and of the wider church outside all walls.

All greetings to you and, with a full measure of its old time meaning—Good bye.

Williamstown, June 8, 1892.

Yours always,

SAMUEL F. CLARKE.

Cui Bono?

REV. T. G. MILSTED.

We have with us to-day another of the Chicago ministers whose name, but for a miscarried letter, would have appeared on our program; but I know we will all be glad to hear from Mr. Milsted.

MR. MILSTED'S RESPONSE.

Dear friends, ladies and gentlemen: They say that man proposes but that God disposes. Some of us, however, have disposing powers a little nearer to us, or that perhaps act upon us a little oftener and a little more forcibly perhaps than that greater disposing power. When I told my wife recently that before my church closed I was going to Davenport to see my mother, she said, "Very well, then you must go this week." That settled it for me, and this week I prepared to go. We had heard of this celebration at Geneva, but, through the miscarriage of the letter of which Brother Penney spoke, we did not know what the nature of it would be: when we found this out, my wife said, "You can't go to Davenport this week; you must go to Geneva." So here I am.

Mr. Penney had asked me to speak on the subject, "*Cui Bono?*" "What is the good of the church; for whose benefit is the church?" And as I had told him I would be in another State at that time, I supposed that, of course, he would have assigned that subject to someone else, so I came expecting to have only the pleasure of listening. So you see there may have been some special Providence in this arrangement after all, for if I had planned to speak of the "*Cui Bono?*" of the Church; you might not have escaped so easily as you now will, because I have had only a few moments to think of the question, "What is the use and benefit of a Church like this."

If I could only point to the two or three sainted characters that have sanctified this Church, and have given the blessing and the benediction of their spirit to the world, I know that all of the faithful men and women who have toiled here would say that all the toil and work of their lives was not in vain, in having given to our denomination and to the religious world the lives of such men as Conant and Herbert and the other workers here. I hold that such characters are unique in modern Christendom, and their only parallel is in the early days of the martyrs when men's souls were stirred to their depths. They could not have found room for such characters in other churches, because their souls were open to all God's stock of truth, and they did not have to apologize for it; they did not have to blind their eyes; there were no secret recesses in God's creation into which they did not dare to look, but they gave their great characters to our modern life, and that is one of the benefits that this church has been, not only to this place but to our country. This church is to be the great school of your souls and of the souls of your children. There are in your midst schools to train the minds of the young; you should also have a place to train their souls, for we do not come into the world full-grown men and women of God. We are born with our Godlike faculties in the germ, just as we are born with our mental and physical natures in the germ, and just as it takes the school to unfold all our powers of mind, and just as it takes all the great benefits we have of a physical kind to unfold and develop our physical natures, so I hold it needs the church to unfold and develop the divine nature; and for that purpose the church exists here for you and for your children.

As I was coming out here to-day I looked out of the car window and I saw some birds sitting on the telegraph wires, and I was reminded of the beautiful poem by Mrs Whitney, in which she tells about these little birds 'sitting on the telegraph wires, and how that they chitter and flitter and fold their wings, and think that for them and their sires were stretched always on purpose those wonderful wires.' And as they sit there and think, if they think at all, that those strings were stretched for themselves, the news of the world runs under them: how values rise and decline; how great souls are taken away from our midst; how armies meet in battle-shock, and while that is going through the wires, they only see the wires stretching away. So the lines of eternity, and immortality, and the thought of God and the diviner life run through our lives. Often like the birds we only see the visible thing and forget that through the lines of our lives are flying the messages of God and eternity too deep and vast to be wholly comprehended by our mortal powers. The church is continually in our midst to call these messages to mind, to interpret them to us that their grand meaning may strengthen and uplift our souls.

The Church can only be good and great with great and good and loyal men and women within it. The Church is only made of those that are within it, and unless you are true, the Church will not have the influence in this community that it should have. Your Church does not exist for freedom only. Read when you get home all that beautiful poem of Bryant on Freedom, in which he explodes the fallacy held by so many people that freedom is simply to do nothing, and in which he says:

“O Freedom! Thou art not, as poets dream,
A fair young maid, with light and delicate limb,
And wavy tresses gushing from the cap
With which the Roman master crowned his slave
When he took off the gyves. A bearded man,
Armed to the teeth, art thou; one mailed hand
Grasps the broad shield, and one the sword.”

Then he goes on to tell how he is scarred, and how his

* * * * “Massive limbs
Are strong with struggling.” * *

And how he has even been imprisoned in “dungeon deep,” but that he broke his walls and chains and came out to do good; and so freedom in religion is not some light and delicate thing, it is something strong. It rises up equal to all responsibilities, and we hope this Church through the next fifty years will be as good and great and glorious as it has been in the fifty years that we celebrate to-day.

A Living Saint,

MRS. J. D. HARVEY.

Before we proceed with the second half of our prepared program, there is one more toast that is not down here. It does not need to be, because the people of Geneva and those who know and have come in contact with the people of Geneva, find it written on their hearts. I shall call upon Mrs. Harvey to respond to the toast, “A Living Saint, Timothy Harold Eddowes.”

MRS. HARVEY'S RESPONSE.

At the risk of appearing before you again with a very red face and the engine having the best of it, I have come to say one word outside of the program. You have heard about so many Saints that we have had with us in the past, but we are so fortunate as to

have still another one who is here, and who, we hope, will be here for many years.

We have a great many ministers here to-day who are doing a great work in the world, but it seems to me to be a small thing to preach, to what it is to do everything except preach; but that is what our Saint does who has been here twenty-five years, anyway. He has not preached here regularly for many years, but he buries us all, marries us all, does all the work in between—I could not tell you all the things he does, but he is what keeps this Church going. He manages the Sunday School, and above all, he has faith that we will always have some money to keep up this Church and will always have a minister, even when no one else believes it.

Last year, the trustees were very much discouraged and it was even feared that we could not go on, but we handed everything over to him, and how successful he has been you can judge from our Church and our fine young minister who is here. He believes in young ministers; imports them every few years; teaches them how to preach; warns them off the breakers, and does everything that can be done. And that is our "Living Saint" whom I wanted you to know about. [Calls for Eddowes.]

Response.**REV. T. H. EDDOWES.**

They insist upon hearing from Mr. Eddowes.

MR. EDDOWES' RESPONSE.

I have always liked Geneva very well, but I did not know I had got to heaven. It is very true that I have known this Church twenty-seven years, and it was the first Church that I ever had, but I felt as soon as I came to Geneva that this was my home. There was something about my earlier home that I had never liked; it was at that place, Galena, that I spoke to you about this morning where my father's family had such hard times starting a Unitarian Church. The rest of my family were very much attached to Galena, but from my childhood on, I was always glad to go away from it and very sorry to go back to it even while my folks were living there; so when I came to Geneva and found there was a Unitarian Church here, and I could have charge of it, I was at home, and if heaven and home are the same things, I am perfectly willing to take this for heaven. Mrs. Harvey has told you of what I do for this Church. I am vain enough, or weak enough, or something or other enough, to say that it is just the one thing in this world I had rather do than anything else, because I became so interested in the people who were here when I came; and there is something or other about the Eddowes family that is always putting them in

situations where there is a forlorn hope to carry. Whatever under the sun I should do in a place that didn't need a "factotum" or with a church that could run itself, I don't see. I should have to emigrate or else should have to say that I was not in heaven. [Cheers for Eddowes.]

Letter.

REV. CHESTER COVELL.

When Mr. Duncan, as he says, "discovered" me, he sent me down to Buda, and then to Geneseo to have Mr. Miller and Mr. Covell look me over, and I have here a letter from Mr. Covell which I think will serve as a very good introduction to Mr. Duncan, who will respond to "The Illinois Conference."

DEAR FRIENDS:—

It would be a great pleasure to me to be with you on the occasion of the anniversary exercises of which you speak. Honored names will be then called up, which have been connected with your organization—names I much revere. Conant and Herbert can never be forgotten. A line from the latter in '81 speaking of our Illinois Conference, says, "That Fraternity will always be very dear to me, however far from it I may physically be." And how very dear he was to the Geneva Church, and our State Conference.

I must say circumstances will not permit my attendance; but I rejoice in the good time that awaits those who attend.

Fraternally Yours,
C. COVELL.

Buda, June 3, 1892.

The Illinois Conference.

REV. L. J. DUNCAN.

We hope to leave behind us an enduring work whereby those who come after us may "Climb by our labors and thank God for our lives."

Mr. Duncan will now respond to "The Illinois Conference."

MR. DUNCAN'S RESPONSE.

Ladies and gentlemen: It were far better if Father Covell himself were here to speak to this toast, for he is one of the fathers of the Illinois Conference and for many years its secretary and missionary in the field. I would it were that he could be here and say to you the words that I must speak.

In responding to this toast, I am first of all glad to remember

that it was in the Geneva Church that the first steps were taken to incorporate the Illinois Conference on its present basis. Prior to October, 1885, there had been for ten years a talking conference in this state called the "Illinois Fraternity of Liberal Churches;" but in October, 1885, they thought it was time to begin to do some thing more than just talk about this liberal religion, and so at the meeting of that Fraternity held here, steps were taken towards the incorporation. Officers were elected; the name was changed to "The Illinois Conference of Unitarian and other Independent Societies;" the motto, "Freedom, Fellowship, and Character" was adopted; Mr. Effinger was elected the Secretary of the Conference and we started out to be a working organization. Through all the sixteen years of this Conference life, for I count the Fraternity and the Conference as at present organized one living body, through all the life of this Conference, I find that the Geneva Church has been most loyal; sharing in all the responsibilities which that Conference has had to face, sharing also in the triumphs which that Conference has achieved. And so I feel perfectly confident that the constituency which I represent here would feel glad to have me say to you that you have the hearty congratulations, on this anniversary occasion, of the Illinois Conference, and to express the earnest hope that the relations which have been so pleasant and so profitable between us in the past may be continued in the future.

The Illinois Conference to-day is doing all the work that comes to its hands; all that it can find to do. It has only been about sixteen months since the active work of the Conference has been carried on. Prior to that time, for various reasons, we were unable to do very much in the field for several years, but in the last sixteen months we have been prosecuting a pretty vigorous work. The Sunday Circle at Princeton has been revived and set to work in a practical way which bids fair to give us before long another liberal Church in Illinois. A Sunday Circle has been started at Ottawa, Ill. I noticed to-day in the history that was read, that the first communion service of this Church was attended by thirteen people; the first service that was held in Ottawa was attended by thirteen people. Let us hope that Ottawa may have as rich a history in the next fifty years as this Church has had in the past fifty years. A little Circle has been started at Wenona, a most interesting Circle in that it is representative of so many different lines of thought, there are Universalists, Unitarians, Quakers and some people who call themselves "What Nots" for want of a better name. There has been a new movement started at Sterling and Rock Falls, where I shall go to-morrow, that gives promise of abundant success. Prior to last December, there never had been a liberal sermon preached in that town; and I found people there who did not know, as close as they are to Geneva, that there was such a

thing as a Unitarian Church. There are other places I might mention, but particularly I want to speak of the new work which is just coming to us at Streator, which gives good promise of growing to a strong movement. It started under particularly discouraging circumstances. Indeed, the beginning of the Streator movement was no start at all. I went down there and after canvassing for several days, gave it up completely as a hopeless place; but not many months after, there came the word, "Where is that young man who came here last fall?" They had lived, just the few informal words that had been spoken there, they lived, and somebody had been interested enough to find out where they could have some more; and so the work has been carried on, and it is growing.

This Streator movement is something of an indication of the spirit which is all abroad in Illinois. Go where you will, you will always find some one who is ready for our message. Never have I gone to a place yet and made inquiry for people of Liberal, religious opinions and convictions, and failed to find some. I believe most earnestly that if we would realize our opportunities and our duties we would find in a short time that the work in Illinois would be growing faster than one missionary could possibly take care of. I tell you, friends, we have for these people what is to them the very Bread of Life. We have to feed to spiritual babes the sincere milk of the Word, and speaking of milk reminds me of a story with which I will close.

A few years ago, a young couple, city-bred and accustomed to the fare that we who live in cities have to put up with, concluded that they would spend a summer in the country; so they went into the country and bought their milk, and other supplies, of a neighboring farmer and enjoyed it. They believed that farmers were perfectly honest and perfectly trustworthy, and that they could drink that milk without any fear or apprehension whatsoever; but unfortunately one night they kept some of it over, and their confidence received a rude shock, for the next morning there was a suspicious look about that milk that sent Mrs. Younghusband over to the farmer's to inquire about matters. She said, "I thought that when I came out here into the country I certainly could find unadulterated food, but I find that it is not so, the milk that you sent us is adulterated." They inquired what was the matter. "Why," she said, "this morning when I looked at the milk I got of you yesterday, it was all covered with a thick yellow scum, and then my husband and I noticed furthermore that the milk was of a much yellower color than that which we have been accustomed to get." "Well," said the farmer, "you must understand that this scum you are talking about is the cream, and that the rich yellow color you are speaking of is a sign that the milk is perfectly pure and unadulterated." "Don't tell me, don't tell me; we always paid

the highest market price for milk, and always got our milk of a reputable dairyman, and I guess I know pure milk when I see it. Pure milk is characterized by a beautiful pale blue tint." And vain were the efforts of the farmer to convince her that that pale blue tint was a sign of adulteration. Now, what is the point? Simply this: the difficulties we have to contend with arise from the fact that the people to whom we go are so accustomed to having their religion adulterated; it is so watered with orthodox theology that they expect it to have a pale blue tint, and cannot recognize or appreciate pure and unadulterated natural religion when they get it. It is our mission, friends, to so educate those people, and so to cultivate their taste for the "sincere milk of the word" that when we come to them with natural religion, God's blessed gift to man, and say to them; "This is yours; yours to develop," that they will receive it in perfect confidence, and without that fear and trembling and distrust with which they meet us.

Oh, friends, let us fill ourselves full of the mission that is before us. Let us be imbued with the spirit of those men and women who were the founders of this Church and go forward unfalteringly with our work. If we will only put the spirit of pure and undefiled religion into our work we can reap as rich a harvest as did they, and leave behind us as goodly a heritage.

Letter.

REV. JAS. H. WEST.

Before I introduce Mr. Byrnes to respond to the toast "Freedom of Thought and Speech," it seems to me it would be very proper to read to you the greeting from Mr. West who found here, what he feared he should find nowhere, absolute freedom of speech.

MR. WEST'S LETTER.

MY DEAR MRS. HOYT, AND FRIENDS OF THE GENEVA CHURCH:—

That it does not now seem possible for us to be with you on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary, is, believe me, a matter of large regret to us, for we have earnestly desired to be present. We thank you heartily for your invitation.

As you well know, our three and a half years' work with you was a bright chapter in our lives. We always think of you with love. And that the little society still continues, and continues fairly prosperous considering the many limitations amid which it labors, is matter for congratulation for all. That it may continue always with the *Progressive Spirit* we may well hope and labor towards. In repetition the soul can never rest satisfied. It has been

perhaps the greatest drawback of the Christian Church that it has deemed itself a fixed body; the possessor of a completed system; anchored to an infallible word, to which nothing might be, nor needed to be, ever added. For when new discovery, scientific research, deeper thought of students, have found out certain things of Nature and the Soul which cast cloud on things former, and proved them fallacious, the Church has—and naturally, *consistently from its standpoint*—deemed it its duty still to uphold the error. It thus has weaned from itself the allegiance of many (the deepest thinkers perhaps; the truth-lovers; the men of the largest soul and largest faith),—whose company, could the Church but have looked upon itself as the repository of a “progressive” rather than of a “fixed” Word, and thus been able to retain them in its midst, would have made it the great power for good in modern restless time which in earlier years it was in matters of faith and the amalgamating of intermixing nations.

In the present era, however, it would really seem that the Church is waking up to a nobler consciousness of itself; to a nearer right appreciation of its opportunities, of its privileges, of its duties. The great word in Nature, sounding throughout the universe from farthest new-circling sun condensing out of fire-mist down to the latest expanding chestnut or maple tree by our door, is *Progress*. And this great word the Church is now beginning to make its own.

In repetition the soul can never rest satisfied. Without growth it must forever feel that something is lacking. And something *is* lacking.

“In the same brook none ever bathed him twice
 To the same life none ever twice awoke.
 We call the brook the same,—the same we *think*
 Our life, though still more rapid is its flow,—
 Nor mark the much irrevocably lapsed
 And mingled with the sea.”

There is indeed, for all men and things, a certain unconscious change, as thus hinted in the lines of the poet Young. But how much better the progressive spirit;—the *Progressive Spirit, consciously* a co-worker with God! The Spartans in battle threw their shields before them, and then fought their way up to them. Well for us that, seeing how inadequate much of the old is,—how meagre, often repellent, largely unsatisfying,—we to-day find a “Liberal” fold open to us, which our fathers knew not, wherein we may dare to propagate our highest dream, speak our deepest faith, and, if indeed we cannot yet wholly justify all we utter, or give scientific chapter and verse for it, may still launch our faith forward for the world to ponder, and then courageously, month by month, year by year,—gathering argument, fact, inference,—*flight*

our way up to it, and prove it even better than we claimed! Even more:—

“Swift of foot was Hiawatha!
He could shoot an arrow from him,
And run forward with such fleetness
That the arrow fell behind him.”

It is interesting to see, week by week, positions held thirty, twenty, ten years ago, by liberal religious advocates, and at that time looked at with scoffing or with horror by the “faithful,” to-day being accepted and preached boldly by them; while the “liberals” are again thirty, twenty, ten years in advance, propagating truth which once more is matter for scoffing or for horror to those who by and by shall accept and teach *it* likewise. “All in good time,” then.

Nor may we ever stop! There is Progress yet to be. Faith goes on. There can be for us “no resignation of office or winding up of affairs, but always a proceeding to business: not taking off our clothes till we go to bed.” Even one thing of Beauty *found*, or two things, must not detain us. The Yankee in Italy glanced at the Apollo Belvedere, and told his attendant to “check” it in the list of curious objects seen, as he must pass on! He could not stay *there*. The world had more in it, even of admirable statuary, than one Apollo Belvedere. Translate, friends, this incident for yourselves into matters of the soul.

Never was the outlook for man’s spiritual life so bright, so cheerful, so luring, as to-day, with the Church beginning to unwind its age-fastened eye-bandages.

“Out of the dark the circling sphere
Is rounding onward to the light:
We see not yet the *full day* here,
But we do see the *paling night*.”

That the little Unitarian Church in Geneva has not failed to have its part in the new, *modern* developing fiat, “Let there be light,” should make the hearts of all of you very glad and grateful during this Semi-Centennial celebration. Believe us present with you in spirit, with our best hopes and love, and with our expectations that, in your midst, the Progressive Spirit of which I have briefly written will never die out.

Affectionately yours,

JAMES H. WEST.

Leicester, June 6, 1892.

CORA LIVERMORE WEST.

Freedom of Thought and Speech. REV. THOS. P. BYRNES.

The worst sceptic in the world is the man who does not trust the integrity of his own mind to sift truth from error.

We will now hear from Mr. Byrnes, of Humboldt, Iowa, Pastor of this Society from 1887 to 1890.

MR. BYRNES' RESPONSE.

Freedom of thought and freedom of speech is the soul of Protestantism, while the absolute dominion of the Church over the human mind is the soul of Catholicism. Protestantism during its four hundred years of history has not always been true to its first principles and its real ideal, for it has often set up sources of authority as absolute in their dominion over the human mind as that of the Pope or the Church of Rome. The creeds and bibles, the Luthers and Calvins of Protestantism have ruled the minds of Protestant men and women with the same iron hands the Pope of Rome has wielded, and yet freedom of thought and speech was wrapped up in the revolt of Luther as certainly as the sturdy oak is in the tiny acorn. It took three hundred years or more to develop that sturdy oak that we see here to-day. It took three hundred years to give us freedom of thought and of speech, as it has been illustrated to us to-day. But it came; it came with the Declaration of American Independence. It came with Theodore Parker and his volcanic address on "The permanent and the transient in religion." It came with the prophetic voice of Emerson; and that great prophet's call, the Divinity School Address, that Holmes called "Our Spiritual Declaration of Independence," that established religion on its true and final foundation, the living human soul living in constant communion with its God. Freedom of thought and speech has come to stay, as the result of the pleading of Martineau, and that book of his, "The Seat of Authority in Religion," that lays the philosophical foundation for the religion that Emerson had announced with the voice of the prophet. Now, I don't mean that all Protestant men and women are free to think and speak on religion to-day, but I mean that Protestantism has established the right to think and speak, and vindicated its validity in the religious life; and so far as the spirit of the times is discernible, freedom of thought in religion is in the air to-day. The real conflict and antagonism that is shaking the foundations of all the great sects to-day is this conflict and antagonism between freedom and authority in religion. It is the same old conflict between the Catholic and the Protestant principle in religion. The Reformers brought with them such a load of Catholic authority from Rome that these two principles are really fighting for life to-day in almost every Protestant sect. This conflict in the Presbyterian

church is a conflict between these two principles. Briggs is standing for nothing more or less than the Protestant principle of freedom of thought in religion; while Patton and his cohorts are unconsciously working for the Roman doctrine of authority in religion. Now, if freedom of thought is the soul of Protestantism; and the absolute surrender of the human mind to the dominion of the Church is the soul of Catholicism, then either one or the other of these two principles is to triumph in the future. There is no middle ground between them; there is no compromise. It is either absolute free thought or else the absolute surrender of the mind to an authority higher than itself. Now, it matters not what that authority is. Authority is the same the world over. Protestant authority is no better than Catholic authority. They both develop the same cringing character and vassal spirit. Authority in religion is for the one purpose of bringing into subjection the human mind.

John Henry Newman, perhaps the greatest authority of this century, one that has stood the most vigorously for authority in religion, says that men outside of the Catholic Church have tried to devise schemes to bring wilful human nature under subjection. "But where," he says, "Is the representative of things invisible that has the force and the toughness necessary to be a breakwater against the wild intellect of man." He finds no authority equal to Catholic infallibility outside of the Catholic church, and he defends that infallibility on the ground that it does bring into subjection human nature, that it does furnish a breakwater against the wild intellect of man.

I can not, on this occasion, go into any extended inquiry of the foundations on which freedom of thought and speech rest. It rests on that foundation so well laid by Emerson in that great declaration of his, "That nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of the human mind." It rests upon that Scripture teaching of the true light that "lighteth every man," and it ought to have said every woman, "that cometh into the world." Freedom of thought is simply the right to listen to the witnesses that God has implanted in every sane mind. Freedom of thought is the right to follow the light that lighteth every man and every woman that cometh into the world; and resting on this foundation freedom of thought and of speech stands secure with such men and women as are here represented to carry out and illustrate it to the world. I would not to-day stand for freedom of thought and of speech only as a privilege, as a luxury, that we liberals ought to congratulate ourselves that we enjoy. I would insist upon it as a duty, freedom of thought is the first essential to a manly and a womanly character. Freedom of thought and slavery of thought will never produce the same kind of character until all things are possible to man as well as God. Freedom of thought and free religion produce self-

propelling men and women. Slavery of thought and subjection to authority produce cringing, leaning, self-distrustful men and women. When you settle which of these two ideals is the highest you have settled the kind of religion to teach in this world.

Now, freedom of speech rests upon the same foundations that freedom of thought does. If the mind has the right to think, then the lips and the tongues should have the right to utter thought to the world. Freedom of speech rests upon the conviction that the world has a right to its intellectual and spiritual wealth. We may say that men and women are free to think if they want to; that there is no policeman to guard the mind, but I tell you, there are policemen; there are dogmas and superstitions that do this work more effectually than the blue-coated policemen that stand on our corners. There is no city in the world so well guarded as this city of the mind is by the grim dogmas of superstition. As soon as the tendency to free thought arises in the mind, these specters of absolute authority of the Church, of endless hell rise up to suppress the first thought that rises in the minds of many men and women to-day, and until this state of things is changed, until Protestantism and Catholicism shall have been brought to freedom of thought and of speech, this Church and the Churches that stand for those principles will have a great future in this world.

Woman's Relation to Religious Freedom.

MRS. CELIA PARKER WOOLLEY.

New ideas and motives were at work within her, the results of which were likely to be all the more genuine that they were only half recognized by herself.

I think, as in the first case, I need not enter into any discussion or give any reason why Mrs. Woolley should respond to "Woman's Relation to Religious Freedom."

MRS. WOOLLEY'S RESPONSE.

I have been wondering, Mr. Chairman, whether you stopped to consider the amount of moral dynamite in the selection of this subject, the combination of two such words as "woman" and "freedom." It is a rather serious subject to me and I fear I shall not be able to treat it with that lightness and ease that belong to after-dinner efforts of this kind. It has prompted me to take a text, not from the Bible, but from one of our modern prophets, Olive Schreiner. It is from one of the shorter allegories in her latest volume of "Dreams," and is entitled, if I remember aright, "The Angel of Life," and runs as follows: The Angel of Life approached

a woman sleeping, bearing a gift in each hand, and saying to the woman "Choose." The woman waited long and finally chose—Freedom. The Angel smiled and said "That is well. Hadst thou chosen the other I would have given thee thy choice, but I should have gone away, not to return. Now I shall return, and when thou see'st me again, I shall bear both gifts in one hand.

There is a profound truth in this little fable whether you regard the sleeping woman as typical of the entire race of men and women together, typical of both as truth-seekers, or whether you take the figure as standing for woman alone, in her search for a higher and more complete womanhood. It leads us also to think of the comparative merits of love and freedom as factors of growth. I don't know that I would go so far as to say that a broader and truer synthesis is reached in the word Freedom than the word Love, but I certainly feel that the last word is used in often a very injurious and misleading way. I hear much preaching of love in the pulpits that offends both my taste and judgment, still, undoubtedly love is the grander, more inclusive word than any other in our human speech, when rightly used. What the allegory means to teach is, I think, that if Love is the word defining the spirit that governs all things, Freedom is the word which defines that method of growth by which we reach the truest conception of love and become its helpful ministers.

Historically, the allegory does not speak the truth. Historically, as a matter of fact in her own personal experience and that of her race, woman has never chosen freedom before love. On the contrary, all her choices have been those of love, those choices represented in the various relations in life which she has been called on to sustain, of society, the family, the church. So that when we try to talk about woman's relation to freedom, or to religious freedom, we seem to have little to say. We should find a great deal to say if we were to speak of woman's relation to religion. Then we could speak of her zeal, her devotion, her piety, the large numbers she has always brought to the support of the church compared with man. But when we remember how often that devotion has been purchased at the cost of real intelligence on her part, how her zeal has generally stood for bigotry and ignorance, then we see the difficulty of saying much in her favor on this special subject. But the past is one thing, the future another, and my subject is justified by the hope and the promise held out to woman and to the world through her, in this era of awakening intelligence and responsibility in which we live. To-day, we stand at that point in the development of religious thought, or rather in the development of all thought, when freedom is seen to be a necessary condition of intellectual life. Socially, religiously, domestically, woman never enjoyed that degree of liberty that is given her to-day, freedom to use her own mind and heart in

solving the problems of life, that comes to her not as a woman but as a human being. To be of great worth to the world and to man she must cultivate all her powers unhindered, must make the most and best of herself. She must choose freedom first, before love, or love will be unworthily chosen. As I think of this, and remember how complex are all the relations of life, see how much of pain, misunderstanding and seeming wrong such choice on woman's part means, I see how the strain and pain of new growth must be felt by man as well as by her, how she has in some respects the easier task, since she has but to choose for herself; while man who has so long held the reins of privilege, influence and authority must make her choice his, choosing freedom for her with freedom for himself. Men have much to learn and suffer here.

In their religious life women have had a voice and influence only on the lower plain of the church's practical work. Woman has contributed too little to the thought the higher spirituality of the church. Men will be her natural leaders here for a long time to come. Not until she has learned to think independently as well as reverently will her relation to the coming creed founded on perfect mental liberty, be established.

The Literary Value of the Liberal Faith.

MR. FORREST CRISSEY.

In the absence of Mr. LeBaron, who was to have responded to "The Fox River Valley" I shall call upon my friend Mr. Crissey to speak to us upon the subject which is suggested to me by a story which I heard Mrs. Sheppard tell the other evening, and with her kind permission, I will mangle it. It seems a lady had been attending Mr. Gannett's church, and was calling upon her former pastor, a Presbyterian. He asked her where she attended church and she told him. He asked about the church, if it was a strong one; she said 'no, that it was not,' and ventured the assertion that 'outside of New England there were very few popular Unitarian churches.' He looked over his glasses in a peculiar way and said, "Yes, I believe they are not very popular, but Unitarianism is in all of our literature and it is in the air." I call upon Mr. Crissey to respond to the toast, "The Literary

Value of the Liberal Faith."

MR. CRISSEY'S RESPONSE.

It seems to me that nothing short of malice aforethought could have devised the toast "The Literary Value of the Liberal Faith."

If the master of ceremonies had proposed some subject at least partially open to discussion:—say for instance, "Is this Collation Satisfying to Appetite;" "Is there a Unitarian Church in Geneva" or "Has it Rained"—then there might have been some chance for response. But when there is not a book that can hope to outlive its decade in all the real literature of to-day that does not owe its creation to the liberal spirit which we celebrate, how can you consider the Literary Value of the Liberal Faith open to discussion? From Hugo and Emerson down to the last paper covered novel in the news agents's pile you can scarcely name one volume that contains a touch of genius that has not caught its vital spark from the *Faith That Makes Faithful*. More than that you cannot point to a line in any of the reputed literature of orthodoxy that stands up above the dead level of its surrounding platitude that does not bear upon its face the proof that its author had lapsed into a moment of natural thinking, of free thought.

The legitimate issue of a mind impregnated with the genuine orthodox spirit is a literary *crab*, bound to progress backward into the gathering dust of Sunday School library shelves, without hope of resurrection beyond being sent with donations of cast-off clothing to struggling missionaries upon the frontier. In no realm of activity does the human mind approach so near to creation as in literature. What kind of a creation can you expect from a mind bound with the chains of the old creeds, dragging the heavy ball of a belief in eternal torment and the orthodox conception of God?

Imagine a mind that believes that thousands of its fellow beings are going down to everlasting damnation, indulging the nice discrimination in the quirks and foibles of human nature, the delightfully trifling leisure and exquisite artistic finish which we find in W. D. Howells. Only a mind that believes in the ultimate happiness of all and in the final triumph of *good* as the sure destiny of the universe can have that liberty of thought, that largeness of Faith and that repose of mind which is vital to the creation of true literature.

The Centennial Celebration, REV. JAS. VILA BLAKE.

*With prescient sight, more daring than a seer's
My soaring spirit leaped ten hundred years.*

You may not have noticed, but it is nevertheless true, that this program falls naturally into three divisions. The first is reminiscent; the second is general; the third is prophetic; and now we will hear from Mr. Blake about "The Centennial Celebration."

MR. BLAKE'S RESPONSE.

BRETHREN AND SISTEREN: You never will know what a fine speech I had prepared. All day, since I learned what I was to speak about, I have been busy thinking of fine things to say. I have been observing this beautiful scenery; looking at the birds, the trees, the grassy lawn, the sunlight, striving to win from each a bit of expression for this hour. And I got it. But I have received a violent shock. A few moments ago a friend said to me, "Are you going to talk much? The Lord help us, if you are." And I haven't recovered from that shock sufficiently to speak to you. Besides, I noticed the poetical couplet with which I am introduced on the program:

"With prescient sight, more daring than a seer's
My soaring spirit leaped ten hundred years."

Since I looked at that I have been trying hard to remember whence it came. I have a dim idea that I have met those lines before somewhere. Between the shock I have spoken of and the occupation of my mind observing those lines, what I had to say has gone clean out of my head. "Leaped ten hundred years!" Did you ever know anything so foolish as the poets are,—if you can call that line a poet's? I think I could write two lines just as good as those are, myself. "Leaped ten hundred years." Why, I find an insurmountable difficulty in being required to leap fifty years, to tell what is in reserve for your Centennial; and after the shock I have spoken of, I shall not try. I will not fail by trying. There is time enough, though the hour is late; but I shall not give you anything after that shock. I shall simply tell you a story, which you can apply for yourselves, about an Eastern Dervis who came to a town in his travels, ascended the pulpit, and the people being gathered all around, as you are, said, "Oh ye people, do you know what I am going to talk to you about?" And they said "No, we do not know." "Oh!" said the Dervis, "I will not talk to such a pack of fools." And he got down from the pulpit and went away. The next day he came and cried out, "Oh ye people, do ye know what I am going to talk to you about?" And they all cried out, remembering their disappointment the day before "Yes, we do." "Then," said he, "There is no need of my talking." And again he went away. The next day he came as before. I think he must

have had some such people as these of the poet in his mind, that could look forward and tell something about what was to be. He said, "Oh ye people, do ye know what I am going to talk to you about." And they, better instructed, answered, "Some of us know, and some of us do not know." "Then," said the Dervis "Let those who know tell those who do not know." And he went away—as I do now.

Congratulatory Letters.

FROM the large number of congratulatory letters which were received, a few have been selected for publication as being of general interest to those who will read the published proceedings.

FROM EDWARD EVERETT HALE, D. D.

ROXBURY, MASS., JUNE 15, 1892.

MY DEAR MR. HARVEY:—

I am sorry to see that your love-feast has passed. I meant to write a historical letter, because I remember Conant perfectly well. He was one of the most distinguished missionaries I have ever known.

At that time we thought the Rock River country was the kingdom of heaven, and in that very year I offered my services to the Unitarian Association, to go to the West and spend my life as a preacher, if they would advance fifteen dollars for my expenses. The board met and considered the subject, and sent me word that they did not think they should get enough for their money. In this they were undoubtedly right. I did not go, and that is the reason that I am writing you here now, instead of writing to my friend DeNormandie the account of the success of the fifty-year celebration.

When I received your letter, I did not even hope that I could myself come to Geneva, because I am going to England just at this time, but I did think I could send my congratulations.

Truly yours,
EDW. . HALE.

FROM MARIE L. LAMB.

546 GARFIELD AVE., CHICAGO, JUNE 2, 1892.

MRS. A. O. HOYT; DEAR MADAM:—

Through Miss LeBaron, my daughter and I received invitations to be present at the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Unitarian Society of Geneva, Ill.

Be assured that the infirmities of seventy-seven alone compel me to extend to you, with our thanks, sincere regrets for absence on this very interesting occasion.

It was in the summer of 1854 that we, with our pastor, Rev. Rush R. Shippen, picnicked on the island, I think, in Fox River. It was a lovely day and we had a delightful time. I thought it one of the prettiest towns I was ever in.

That day was the commencement of a charming acquaintance with Rev. and Mrs. Conant. We had the pleasure of entertaining Mr. Conant several times when he exchanged with our pastors.

I several times visited friends in Geneva, whom I had known from childhood in Massachusetts, and the cemetery where the dear elder friend of my young years is laid, the first wife of Mr. Wm. Chauncy Wilder—a Miss Waters. Mr. Conant told me she had the finest, clearest Unitarian mind he had ever met; it was a feast to converse with her.

I would like very much to again meet Mr. and Miss Eddowes. Will you please give my compliments and address to them? And Mrs. Long and her little people; I want to see them so much. Oh, how I wish I could once again enter the dear old church and listen to the voice of prayer and song.

Hoping that the days may be pleasant and your celebration a success in every particular, and begging you to excuse the garrulous propensity of an old lady,

I remain very sincerely yours,
MARIE L. LAMB.

FROM THOMAS MOULDING.

CHICAGO, ILL., JUNE 10, 1892.

MRS. A. HOYT:—

We should be pleased to attend the fiftieth anniversary of the organization of your Church, but at the last moment find that the state of my own and Mrs. Moulding's health impels us to leave the city to-morrow for Colorado. We have very pleasant recollections of the little Church; my father and family found a genial Church home there in June, 1851, he had been a Unitarian for over twenty-five years at that time and found in Mr. Conant a grand good friend and delightful preacher and our whole family learned to

love him dearly. We were no more strangers in a strange land when we or rather they, as I remained in Chicago, reached Geneva.

Yours respectfully,
THOMAS MOULDING.

FROM C. A. PHILLIPS.

CHICAGO, ILL., JUNE 7, 1892.

MRS. A. O. HOYT, DEAR MADAM:—

I regret very much indeed that I shall not be able to avail myself of your kind invitation to attend the Celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the organization of the First Unitarian Society of Geneva, Illinois, to be held at that place on the tenth, eleventh and twelfth insts.

I have delayed answering your communication in the hope that matters might so shape themselves as to enable me to be present and to meet, once more at least, the friends and relatives whose ranks are becoming year by year more thinned as one by one they reach the end of that road "which widens and brightens as it leads to heaven," and are called to face the great mystery whose shadow is ever over all the Children of Men. Only the most imperative reasons could have kept me from attending the Celebration, but nothing is left me now but to convey to you and through you, my warmest regards to those to whom I am allied by blood or friendship and whose kind faces are always fresh in memory when I recall the scenes of the four happy years (from 1849 to 1853) which I spent in Geneva.

Hoping the occasion will be one of unalloyed pleasure and delight to those who are so fortunate as to be able to participate, I remain,

Yours very sincerely,
C. A. PHILLIPS.

FROM HON. J. C. SHERWIN.

DENVER, COLORADO, JUNE 9, 1892.

DEAR MRS. HOYT:—

I have just returned and find your invitation to attend the Fiftieth Anniversary of the organization of the Unitarian Society of Geneva. I am sorry that it is impossible for me to accept that invitation and meet the friends, old and new, of that society.

The sunlight of June does not glorify a more interesting spot to me than that old church. The deep shadows of its surrounding maples are not more grateful to the children who play under them of a summer's day, than are the precious memories that have their origin within the sacred walls of the dear old church.

What blessings have flowed from it, to us all!

The zeal and eloquence of Herbert, the joyous Sunday Schools,

the kindly social gatherings, the haunting recollections of loved ones never again to enter its precincts in bodily form, all crowd upon me as I write.

I know it will be a time of rare pleasure to all who are so fortunate as to attend. I will be with them in thought.

May the recollections and achievements of the half-century now closing be a prophecy and sure guarantee that the next fifty years shall even surpass them in all good work for the glory of God and the uplifting of man.

Sincerely yours,
J. C. SHERWIN.

FROM COL. JOHN S. WILCOX.

ELGIN, ILL., JUNE 6, 1892.

MRS. A. O. HOYT; DEAR MADAM:—

As I think of your little church, memory recalls so many forms and faces very dear in boyhood and young manhood, thirty-five and forty years ago, Mr. Conant, the pastor, and his always pleasant, cheerful wife, with their family, the Clark's—three generations, the Pattens (and how we young people loved Mrs. Charles Patten,) the Wilsons and many others. It is very pleasant to recall the bright memory of those far away days. It is sad to think of so many friends whose greeting shall be heard no more on earth. It is unmistakably delightful to know the eternal day is not far away, when we shall see and know yet more clearly the joys of a still closer friendship.

I sincerely hope the occasion will be helpful and pleasant to every one present.

Very truly yours,
JOHN S. WILCOX.

FROM PAUL R. WRIGHT.

SANTA BARBARA, CAL., JUNE 6, 1892.

DEAR BRO. JOE:—

Your letter of May 30 relative to the proposed Celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the organization of the Geneva Unitarian Church was duly received. We had previously received circulars and letters of similar import from Mr. Eddowes and Miss Fanny LeBaron.

I regret that we cannot be present on that occasion and that we can furnish nothing that will contribute materially to the interest. Of course, as you suggest, the interest of the Celebration will mostly center around the memory of Mr. Conant. Kind and heartfelt words of eulogy will be spoken, because they are deserv-

ed. I am glad to believe that there will be present at the Celebration many of the old time friends of Mr. Conant who can use more fitting language to express the sentiments which all his friends cherish for his memory, than I am able to command. My acquaintance with Mr. Conant commenced about the time when he was doing some missionary work and endeavoring to establish a liberal Church in the very orthodox town of Elgin, but I did not, as you seem to suppose, have any active part in the movement. I was then a member in "good and regular standing" of the orthodox Congregational Church, although, even then, I had drifted a long way from the Calvinistic creed of my church, and attended Mr. Conant's meetings as often as circumstances permitted. I enjoyed his preaching greatly. The substance of his discourses was far in advance of the average sermon I had listened to up to that time.

A more intimate acquaintance with him helped me at a time when I needed help. Doubtless many persons can bear the same testimony. What higher tribute can we pay to the memory of any man, than to say that he helped those with whom he came in contact—helped them to clearer thoughts and better lives! Probably Mr. Conant never knew the extent of the help he conferred upon the world, but if he should be present at the coming Celebration, (and who knows that he will not be?) I can imagine that he will hear much that will be gratifying to him.

I have a warm regard for other members of this little Church with whom I was acquainted, but most of them have long since departed this life.

I am sure you will have an enjoyable time at the coming gathering, and I hope it will be a successful one and the coming of the Year of Jubilee for the Geneva Church.

Much love to you all,
PAUL R. WRIGHT.

To Mr. J. D. Harvey, Geneva, Ill.

Sunday School Session.

ON Sunday, June 12, the last day of the celebration, teachers and pupils, old and new, gathered in the church to listen to words from those who associated the early days of the School with their own youth and from those whose later memories are connected with the school's progress.

Besides the papers which are published, remarks were made by Mrs. Mary P. Jarvis and Miss Jarvis of Cobden; by Miss Francis LeBaron of Elgin who strove to impress the children with the significance of the occasion; by Rev. Thos. P. Byrnes of Humboldt, Iowa and by Mrs. H. A. Gould of Geneva. Two papers are here presented in full as follows:

Historical Chapter,
Sunday School Memories,

Rev. T. H. Eddowes
Mrs. Ellen E. L. Woodward

Historical Chapter.

BY REV. T. H. EDDOWES.

JULY 20, 1851, Mr. Conant preached his tenth anniversary sermon. Referring to the state of affairs at the time of his coming in 1841 he says:

"Elder John Walworth had been preaching a part of the time the preceding year; the Methodist minister in the circuit had sometimes preached here, but for want of encouragement had abandoned the place; there had been also Episcopal and Presbyterian and Baptist preaching, and I was informed that there had been as many as ten unsuccessful attempts made by ministers of one religious denomination or another to sustain worship or establish a society in the place. The moral and religious reputation of the village was low; intemperance, profanity and disregard for the Sabbath were characteristic of Geneva in 1841. There was one star of hope in this night of moral darkness; it was the Geneva Sunday School.

A young man from Cambridge (Harvard) University had settled in the place and engaged in the legal profession. Seeing the exposed moral condition of the children of the village, he engaged the assistance of a few friends

and opened a Sunday School. Fearless of the ridicule that might be cast upon his enterprise, and faithful to his high convictions of duty, from Sabbath to Sabbath, while no society existed and no other worship was held, he gathered his little company of children together to impart to them ideas of God and Christ and eternal life, and to endeavor to lead them into the paths of virtue and religion. On my first visit to Geneva in 1840 I found him thus employed, but before my return from Cambridge and the commencement of my ministry here he had been called by the providence of God to a higher sphere, and his Sunday School was left to be sustained by other hearts and hands. His dust hallows our burial ground, and the name of Caleb A. Buckingham is and will be hallowed in the hearts of that band of teachers who were connected with him. * * * * * The Sunday School and the efforts put forth in establishing and sustaining it were the most hopeful appearances of moral and religious life and progress in the place. * * * * *

For my own encouragement, and as an indication that it might be my appropriate sphere of labor, the Sunday School had been started and was sustained chiefly by those of the same denominational faith."

This extaret with one reference in Mr. Conant's journal under date of Sept. 1, 1846, where he says: "Our Sunday School is in a flourishing condition—seventy or eighty connected with it," makes all the history of the Sunday School we have previous to 1868.

No better place will occur in these memoirs to charge the present and coming generation in the Church with the importance of preserving every item of history connected with the School. I find that it would be of much interest to note who among the earlier settlers were pupils or officers. It would also have been quite worth

the time and effort to have had a catalogue of the first library and copies of every manual used in the school as well as of the periodicals taken and distributed by it.

It could easily be shown how important a place the School has filled in the history of the Church if we only had the records to show how faithfully its work has been carried on through all the various ups and downs of the Society. I think it can be said truthfully that it has never stopped though there have been periods of suspension of its activity for sufficient reason. We should have the records that would show how when there was an interval between the pastorates the School has been the outlet for the zeal of the society which kept the church open for supplies, (it is on record that in one instance the School paid for preaching out of its treasury) and how when it seemed that the school must be given up if we did not have a minister, that consideration has been sufficient to rouse the resolutions that we would have a minister.

A complete record would also have shown us that the zeal which supports the School is no fitful matter. Allusion has been made to the services of Miss Carr. Other names could be given of those who have given their enthusiasm, their culture, their wisdom, their time and their strength, in that long, steady way that counts up into decades and scores of years of service, but all the records stand below that of Harriet Patten who in this school and others was a teacher for fifty years. Mrs. Mary P. Jarvis, Mrs Robt. Long, Sr., Dr. LeBaron and Mrs. A. H. Conant are names that stand well up in the list. Of the present teachers and officers, ten in number, six have served the School over ten years, three of them over twenty years. Another name to be gratefully recorded is that of Mrs. Mary J. Whiting. Mr. Conant makes mention in one of his anniversary sermons of the great interest she had in

it, the work she did in it, and how after her active work was ended by removal, through many years of invalidism, her efforts made from the sick room resulted in procuring one hundred dollars worth of books for the library.

In 1868, a Sunday School Society was formed the object of which was to provide a more intimate connection between the Sunday School and the Church; the officers of the society being elected from the Church by the School. The object has not been fully attained as but few of these officers have appreciated the field for usefulness offered them. We still keep up the annual election however in the hope that some one will some day show what an honor it is to be president of the Sunday School Society. Ours was the first School to introduce the observance of Children's Day or, as it is less happily though more popularly styled, Flower Sunday.

My chief concern on taking charge of the School as Superintendent in 1865 was the library. It has been an object of special care ever since that time. In the absence of any public library I am confident that it has been the means of establishing a taste for first-class fiction in a large number who would not otherwise have come in contact with any but the lower grade; not that our library is confined to fiction but it necessarily predominates in providing reading for as young a class as attend our Sunday School.

Somewhere in the seventies during the prosperity of Mr. Herbert's pastorate we reached the dignity of a printed catalogue of the library. The attendance in that day was so large that it was a necessity in facilitating the distribution of the books. It showed that we had between five and six hundred volumes. We have kept the number about the same since that time by the removal of worn out or uncalled for books, as we have replenished

from time to time. One of these replenishments, it is pleasant to note, came in the form of a donation from Unity Church of Chicago, as an acknowledgement of the services of the School in responding to the calls of that Church for flowers at various times for their special services. It is equally pleasant to record that one of our visitors at the semi-centennial celebration left us a donation of ten dollars for the library, five dollars of which was given in memory of Mrs. Patten's work.

Sunday School Memories.

BY MRS. ELLEN E. L. WOODWARD OF CHICAGO.

I DO not remember ever to have heard of Rip Van Winkle appearing in a bonnet and gown, rubbing the mists of years out of dim and faded eyes and endeavoring to understand and reconcile past memories with present conditions; how it is that faces that were young and joyous thirty years a-gone have haloes of white hair about them. Other faces which looked up with the sweet, trusting eyes of childhood, stand bowed with my own, and more than this, they say: "This is my daughter," or "This is my boy," and behold, comely maidens and manly youths are standing beside them eagerly waiting to take up and carry on the work of life. Other faces come and go, flitting in and out among you all, and one close at hand is a fair young daughter of New England. Full of the enthusiasm of her years she goes about the Master's business. A little while and the dear eyes will be closed and the pale hands rested from their labor. The first young teacher had been promoted to the highest place—there to dwell in the light of the great white throne forever and forever. One after another

er have followed until the number in the yon quiet haven out-numbers those who wait a little longer.

It is a bewildering thing to do, to wake and find one's self *here*, for the place is haunted, is full, is crowded with the unseen, subtle yet still vivifying presence of those whose hearts were wrought into the very stones and mortar of the building. We heard yesterday much of their patient, earnest work through times of sunshine and of shadow, but the chief glory of the Church has not been reached, has been saved as we save choice bits for the last—the Sunday School! The Sunday School which, no matter what the vicissitudes of the Church, has gone steadily on with the most important aim in life accomplished—the religious education of the young. It has had faith in itself, in its members, and to-day, after half a century has passed, it can look upon garnered sheaves, and say with righteous pride, "Of all who have entered here scarce none but have illustrated in most honorable upright lives the teachings received in this venerable building." Perhaps the storms and strife of the world may have been more than some could stand against; they are rare who at some point on the weary way do not stumble, perhaps fall, and are bruised with cruel hurts, and sorrowful suffering comes to all; but at eve the Father leads his tired children home, and tenderly shields them in his fold.

In the main the beautiful faith we profess has demonstrated its truth in the lives of its children as the years go on and on.

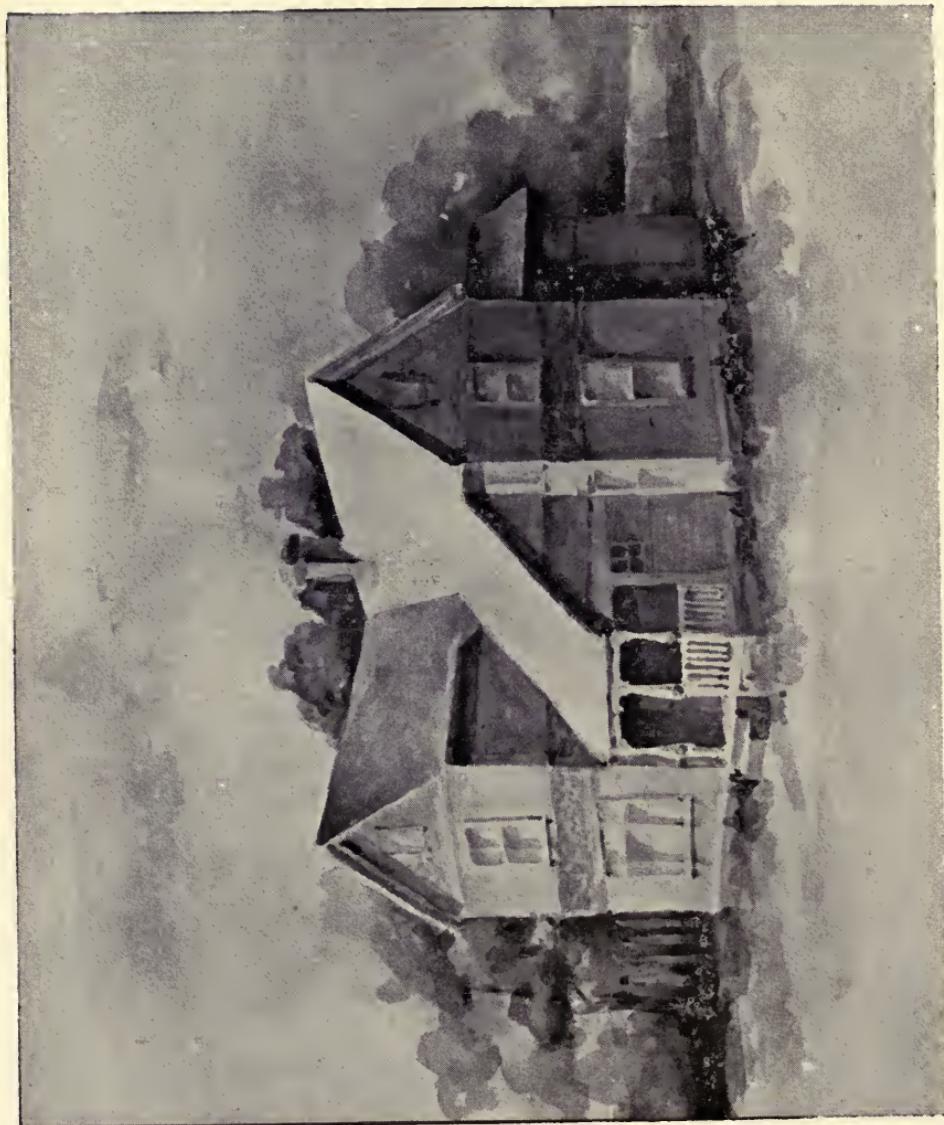
I think I am not mistaken when I say as a "substance of doctrine" taught by this Sunday School, that we believe that as the majestic oak is contained in embryo in the tiny acorn, so the powers of an angel are wrapped up in the little child. His mind says one "not you, nor I nor an angel can comprehend." We have aimed to do this child's

mind simple justice, having faith in it, and most especially as fitted for religion, not that we consider it virtuous and holy at birth, for these qualities cannot be born with us, they are the free, voluntary effort of a being who knows the distinction between right and wrong and who, when tempted, adheres to the right. We have faith in the child as capable of knowing and loving the good and the true; as having a conscience to take the side of duty; as open to motives for welldoing; as formed for knowledge, wisdom, piety and heavenly love.

Believing thus, and knowing the world will do *its* duty by the little one, knowing it will teach it all evil passions without check or guide, passions given for good and wise ends when rightly guided and disciplined—necessary ingredients of character—, but it is no part of the world's duty to furnish the needed counterpoise, balance wheels that will keep all these passions under proper subjection; to furnish the bridle which will guide them in the right course and restrain them when of undue speed. Neither is it any part of its duty to still further develop, nourish and strengthen those higher moral and religious feelings and obligations which should sit on the throne of man's mind and preside over the whole character, the whole man. The great end of this life is the foundation of character which shall be fitted for the life that is to come. To accomplish this has been the aim and object of this School; to do what it could to render justice to the powers and faculties of the child's mind and, so far as may be, to supply defects in the education the world gives it, in a word, to awaken moral and spiritual life in the child, and great moral and religious truths are nearer to a child than the principles of natural science. The germs are in his soul. All the elementary ideas of God and duty and love come to him from his own spiritual powers and affections. Moral

good and evil, virtue and vice are revealed to him in his own motives of action and in the motives of those around him. Religion carries its own evidence with it, more than history or science and it should rest more on the soul's own consciousness, experience and observation.

That this school has been potential in awakening clear, affectionate perception of the reality, truth and greatness of religion is amply illustrated in the lives of its children now to the fore, and who to-day with loving tenderness commemorate with grateful hearts the close of its first half-century and with brightest hope look forward at the beginning of the second.



The Parsonage.

AS the time drew near for the semi-centennial exercises it seemed to some of the oldest members of the society and some who had grown up within the walls of the church that, as golden weddings are usually the occasion for the presenting of valuable gifts to the bride and groom from the younger members of the family, so it was right and proper that some substantial gift from the children of the society, now scattered over the land, should be presented to the Church at this time, and a parsonage was pre-eminently the most desirable gift.

Accordingly Messrs. B. W. Dodson, T. H. Edowes and Miss Frances LeBaron constituted themselves a committee to look the field over, correspond with the children of the Church and ascertain their wishes. The results were most encouraging and cheering words and generous donations came from many friends.

The next appeal was made to friends of the Church who had never been members and to the Chicago and other societies. Here again most encouraging sympathy

and generosity was found and strong expressions of appreciation of the bravery and faithfulness of the little Geneva band were received.

The home society has done well and old and young are giving of their small store. With the amount in hand, Robert Long, Architect and Builder and a member of the society, under guidance of the building committee appointed by the society and the original committee, is erecting on the lot south of the church, between two rows of beautiful maples, a tasteful, convenient, eight-room cottage, in modern style.

One item of unusual expense in this particular cottage is the room to be used as a library and pastor's study and which will be fitted up accordingly. Here will be collected valuable books from the libraries of the early pastors, and modern books from various sources for a permanent, minister's library. This convenient home and valuable library will ever be attractive to the future ministers and go far towards making them contented with the small salary the present society is able to pay.

The key that has unlocked the purses of the donors to this parsonage fund is "In Memoriam." All have given gladly in loving remembrance of their parents, of the pastors of their youth, of the friends who had lived here and borne this Church upon their shoulders and of happy days spent here with this pioneer band in the olden time. The society may well feel that the spirits of those who have gone, though silent, are still present with living influence.



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